

P O E M S

B Y

WILLIAM MASON, M.A.

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ARACTACUS:

WRITTEN ON THE MODEL

OF THE

A N C I E N T

G R E E K T R A G E D Y.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1759.

Nos munera Phoebō
Misimus; et lectas DRUIDUM de gente CHOREAS.

MILTON



THE ARGUMENT.

CARACTACUS, King of the Silures, having been defeated by Ostorius, the Roman Praefect, his Queen taken prisoner, and his Son (as it is supposed) either slain or fled, retired with his only Daughter, and took sanctuary amongst the Druids in Mona. Ostorius, after the battle, leaving garrisons in the conquered country, marched to subdue the northern part of Britain, and led his troops to the frontiers of the Brigantes, then governed by Cartismandua. This Queen, dreading the victorious enemy, made a truce with him; one of the conditions of which was, that she should assist the Romans in securing the British King, that he might be carried to Rome to grace the triumph of Claudius. She accordingly gave up her two Sons as hostages, to be sent themselves to Rome, in case they did not seduce Caractacus from his sanctuary, to which place they were to be accompanied by Aulus Didius, and a sufficient force, to effect that design.

The Drama opens on their arrival in the consecrated grove, a little before midnight, and about the time when the Druids, who form the Chorus, were preparing the ceremonial of Caractacus's admission into their order. The two Princes are seized as spies; and the incidents, consequent upon this, form what is called the Episode of the piece. The Exode, or Catastrophe, is prepared by the coming of Arviragus the

King's Son, who, having escaped with life in the late battle, had employed the intermediate time in privately collecting his Father's scattered forces, to put him again in a condition of facing the enemy. His bravery, in defending his Father and the Druids, occasions the Peripetia, or change of fortune; and his death, with the final captivity of Caractacus, concludes the Tragedy.

4 DE 60

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

AULUS DIDIUS, the Roman General.

VELLINUS } Sons of Cartismandua.
ELIDURUS }

* CHORUS, of DRUIDS and BARDS.

CARACTACUS.

EVELINA, daughter to Caractacus.

ARVIRAGUS, son to Caractacus.

SCENE, MONA.

* The Dramatic part of the Chorus is supposed to be chiefly spoken by the Principal Druid; the Lyrical part sung by the Bards.

C A R A C T A C U S,

A

D R A M A T I C P O E M.

AULUS DIDIUS, WITH ROMANS.

THIS is the secret center of the isle :

Here, Romans, pause, and let the eye of wonder
Gaze on the solemn scene; behold yon oak,
How stern he frowns, and with his broad brown arms
Chills the pale plain beneath him : mark yon altar,
The dark stream brawling round its rugged base,
These cliffs, these yawning caverns, this wide circus,
Skirted with unhewn stone : they awe my soul,
As if the very Genius of the place
Himself appear'd, and with terrific tread
Stalk'd thro' his drear domain. And yet, my friends,
(If shapes like his be but the fancy's coinage)
Surely there is a hidden power, that reigns
'Mid the lone majesty of untam'd nature,
Controuling sober reason ; tell me else,
Why do these haunts of barbarous superstition
O'ercome me thus ? I scorn them, yet they awe me.
Call forth the British Princes : in this gloom.

B. 3.

I mean to school them to our enterprise.

[Enter Vellinus and Elidurus.]

AULUS DIDIUS, VELLINUS, ELIDURUS.

Ye pledges dear of Cartismandua's faith,
Approach! and to mine uninstructed ear
Explain this scene of horror.

ELIDURUS.

Daring Roman,
Know that thou stand'st on consecrated ground:
'These mighty piles of magic-planted rock,
Thus rang'd in mystic order, mark the place
Where but at times of holiest festival
The Druid leads his train.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Where dwells the seer?

VELLINUS.

In yonder shaggy cave; on which the moon
Now sheds a side-long gleam. His brotherhood
Possess the neighbouring cliffs.

AULUS DIDIUS.

Yet up the hill

Mine eye descries a distant range of caves,
Delv'd in the ridges of the craggy steep:
And this way still another.

ELIDURUS.

On the left

Reside the Sages skill'd in Nature's lore:
The changeful universe, its numbers, powers,

Studious they measure, save when meditation
 Gives place to holy rites: then in the grove
 Each hath his rank and function. Yonder grotts
 Are tenanted by Bards, who nightly thence,
 Rob'd in their flowing vests of innocent white,
 Descend, with harps that glitter to the moon,
 Hymning immortal strains. The spirits of air,
 Of earth, of water, nay of heaven itself,
 Do listen to their lay: and oft, 'tis said,
 In visible shapes dance they a magic round
 To the high minstrelsy. Now, if thine eye
 Be fated with the view, haste to thy ships;
 And ply thine oars; for, if the Druids learn
 This bold intrusion, thou will find it hard
 To foil their fury.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Prince, I did not moor
 My light-arm'd shallops on this dangerous strand
 To soothe a fruitless curiosity:
 I come in quest of proud Caractacus;
 Who, when our veterans put his troops to flight,
 Found refuge here.

E L I D U R U S.

If here the Monarch rests,
 Presumptuous Chief! thou might'st as well essay
 To pluck him from yon stars: Earth's ample range
 Contains no surer refuge: underneath
 The soil we tread, a hundred secret paths,
 Scoop'd thro' the living rock in winding maze,
 Lead to as many caverns, dark, and deep:

In which the hoary sages act their rites
 Mysterious, rites of such strange potency,
 As, done in open day, would dim the sun,
 Tho' thron'd in noon-tide brightness. In such dens
 He may for life lie hid.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

We know the task.

Most difficult: yet has thy royal mother
 Furnish'd the means.

E L I D U R U S.

My mother say'st thou, Roman?

A U L U S D I D I U S.

In proof of that firm faith she lends to Rome,
 She gave you up her honour's hostages.

E L I D U R U S.

She did: and we submit.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

To Rome we bear you;

From your dear country bear you; from your joys,
 Your loves, your friendships, all your souls hold pre-
 cious.

E L I D U R U S.

And dost thou taunt us, Roman, with our fate?

A U L U S D I D I U S.

No, Youth, by heaven, I would avert that fate.
 With ye for liberty?

V E L L I N U S, E L I D U R U S.

More than for life.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

And would do much to gain it?

V E L L I N U S.

Name the task.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

The task is easy. Haste ye to these Druids :
 Tell them ye come, commission'd by your Queen,
 To seek the great Caractacus; and call
 His valour to her aid, against the Legions,
 Which, led by our Ostorius, now assail
 Her frontiers. The late treaty she has seal'd
 Is yet unknown: and this her royal signet,
 Which more to mask our purpose was obtain'd,
 Shall be your pledge of faith. The eager king
 Will gladly take the charge; and, he consenting,
 What else remains, but to the Meinaï's shore
 Ye lead his credulous step? there will we seize him:
 Bear him to Rome, the substitute for you,
 And give you back to freedom.

V E L L I N U S.

If the Druids—

A U L U S D I D I U S.

If they, or he, prevent this artifice,
 Then force must take its way: then flaming brands,
 And biting axes, wielded by our soldiers,
 Must level these thick shades, and so unlodge
 The lurking savage.

E L I D U R U S.

Gods, shall Mona perish?

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Princes, her every trunk shall on the ground
 Stretch its gigantic length; unless, ere dawn,

Ye lure this untam'd lion to our toils.

Go then, and prosper; I shall to the ships,

And there expect his coming. Youths, remember,

He must to Rome to grace great Caesar's triumph:

Caesar and Fate demand him at your hand.

[Exeunt Aulus Didius and Roman]

E L I D U R U S, V E L L I N U S.

E L I D U R U S.

And will heaven suffer it? Will the just gods,
That tread yon spangled pavement o'er our heads,
Look from their sky and yield him? Will these Druids,
Their sage vicegerents, not call down the thunder;
And will not instant its hot bolts be darted
In such a righteous cause? Yes, good old king,
Yes, last of Britons, thou art heaven's own pledge;
And shalt be such till death.

V E L L I N U S.

What means my brother?

Dost thou refuse the charge?

E L I D U R U S.

Dost thou accept it?

V E L L I N U S.

It gives us liberty.

E L I D U R U S.

It makes us traitors.

Gods, would Vellinus do a deed of baseness?

V E L L I N U S.

Will Elidurus scorn the proffer'd boon

Of freedom?

ELIDURUS.

Yes, when such its guilty price,
Brother, I spurn it.

VELLINUS.

Go then, foolish boy!
I'll do the deed myself.

ELIDURUS.

It shall not be:
I will proclaim the fraud.

VELLINUS.

Wilt thou? 'tis well.
Hie to yon cave; call loudly on the Druid;
And bid him drag to ignominious death
The partner of thy blood. Yet hope not thou
To 'scape; for thou didst join my impious steps:
Therefore his wrath shall curse thee: thou shalt live;
Yet shalt thou live an interdicted wretch,
All rights of nature cancell'd.

ELIDURUS.

Oh Vellinus!
Rend not my soul: by heaven thou know'st I love thee,
As fervently as brother e'er lov'd brother:
And, loving thee, I thought I lov'd mine honour.
Ah! do not wake, dear youth, in this true breast,
So fierce a conflict.

VELLINUS.

Honour's voice commands
Thou should'st obey thy mother, and thy queen.
Honour and Holiness alike conspire

To bid thee save these consecrated groves
From Roman devastation.

E L I D U R U S.

Horrid thought!

Hence let us haste, even to the furthest nook
Of this wide isle; nor view the sacrilege.

V E L L I N U S.

No, let us stay, and by our prosperous art
Prevent the sacrilege. Mark me, my brother;
More years and more experience have matur'd
My sober thought; I will convince thy youth,
That this our deed has every honest sanction
Cool reason may demand.

E L I D U R U S.

To Rome with reason:

Try if 'twill bring her deluging ambition
Into the level course of right and justice:
Try if 'twill tame these insolent invaders;
Who thus, in savageness of conquest, claim
Whom chance of war has spar'd. Do this, and prosper.
But, pray thee, do not reason from my soul
Its inbred honesty: that holy flame,
Howe'er eclips'd by Rome's black influence
In vulgar minds, ought still to brighten ours.

V E L L I N U S.

Vain talker, leave me.

E L I D U R U S.

No, I will not leave thee:

I must not, dare not, in these perilous shades.
Think, if thy fraud should fail, these holy men,

How will their justice rend thy traitorous limbs?
 If thou succeed'st, the fiercer pangs of conscience,
 How will they ever goad thy guilty soul?
 Mercy, defend us! see, the awful Druids
 Are issuing from their caves: hear'st thou yon signal?
 Lo, on the instant all the mountain whitens
 With slow-descending Bards. Retire, retire;
 This is the hour of sacrifice: to stay
 Is death.

V E L L I N U S.

I'll wait the closing of their rites
 In yonder vale: do thou, as likes thee best,
 Betray, or aid me.

E L I D U R U S.

To betray thee, youth,
 That love forbids; honour, alas! to aid thee.

[Exeunt.]

Enter C H O R U S.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Sleep and Silence reign around;
 Not a night-breeze wakes to blow;
 Circle, sons, this holy ground;
 Circle close, in triple row.
 And, if mask'd in vapours drear,
 Any earth-born Spirit dare
 To hover round this sacred space,
 Haste with light spells the murky foe to chase.
 Lift your boughs of vervain blue,
 Dipt in cold September dew;

And dash the moisture chaste, and clear,
O'er the ground, and thro' the air.
Now the place is purg'd and pure.
Brethren! say, for this high hour
Are the milk-white steers prepar'd?
Whose necks the rude yoke never fear'd,
To the furrow yet unbroke?
For such must bleed beneath yon oak.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Druid, these, in order meet,
Are all prepar'd.

S E M I C H O R U S.

But tell me yet,
Cadwall! did thy step profound
Dive into the cavern deep,
Twice twelve fathom under ground,
Where our sage fore-fathers sleep?
Thence with reverence hast thou born,
From the consecrated chest,
The golden sickle, scrip, and vest,
Whilom by old Belinus worn?

S E M I C H O R U S.

Druid, these, in order meet,
Are all prepar'd.

S E M I C H O R U S.

But tell me yet,
From the grot of charms and spells,
Where our matron sister dwells,
Brennus! has thy holy hand
Safely brought the Druid wand;

And the potent adder-stone,
 Gender'd 'fore the autumnal moon?
 When, in undulating twine,
 The foaming snakes prolific join;
 When they hiss, and when they bear
 Their wondrous egg aloof in air;
 Thence, before to earth it fall,
 The Druid, in his hallow'd pall,
 Receives the prize;
 And instant flies,
 Follow'd by the envenom'd brood,
 'Till he cross the crystal flood.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Druid, these, in order meet,
 Are all prepar'd.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Then all's complete.

And now let nine of the selected band,
 Whose greener years besit such station best,
 With wary circuit pace around the grove:
 And guard each inlet; watchful, lest the eye
 Of busy curiosity profane
 Pry on our rites: which now must be as close
 As done i'th' very central womb of earth.
 Occasion claims it; for Caractacus
 This night demands admission to our train.
 He, once our king, while ought his power avail'd
 To save his country from the rod of tyrants,
 That duty past, does wisely now retire
 To end his days in secrecy and peace;

Druid with Druids, in this chief of groves,
 Even in the heart of Mona. See, he comes!
 How awful is his port! mark him, my friends!
 He looks, as doth the tower, whose nodding walls,
 After the conflict of heaven's angry bolts,
 Frown with a dignity unmark'd before,
 Even in its prime of strength. Health to the King!

C A R A C T A C U S, E V E L I N A, C H O R U S.

C A R A C T A C U S.

This holy place, methinks, doth this night wear
 More than its wonted gloom: Druid, these groves
 Have caught the dismal colouring of my soul,
 Changing their dark dun garbs to very sable,
 In pity to their guest. Hail, hallow'd oaks!
 Hail, British born! who, last of British race,
 Hold your primeval rights by nature's charter;
 Not at the nod of Caesar. Happy foresters,
 Ye wave your bold heads in the liberal air;
 Nor ask, for privilege, a praetor's edict.
 Ye, with your tough and intertwisted roots,
 Grasp the firm rocks ye sprung from; and, erect
 In knotty hardihood, still proudly spread
 Your leafy banners 'gainst the tyrannous north,
 Who, Roman like, assails you. Tell me, Druid,
 Is it not better to be such as these,
 Than be the thing I am?

C H O R U S.

To be the thing,

Eternal wisdom wills, is ever best.

C A R A C T A C U S.

But I am lost to that destin'd use
 Eternal wisdom will'd, and fitly therefore
 May wish a change of being. I was born
 A king; and Heaven, who bade these warrior oaks
 Lift their green shields against the fiery sun,
 To fence their subject plain, did mean, that I
 Should, with as firm an arm, protect my people
 Against the pestilent glare of Rome's ambition.
 I fail'd; and how I fail'd, thou know'st too well;
 So does the babbling world: and therefore, Druid,
 I would be any thing save what I am.

C H O R U S.

See, to thy wish, the holy rites prepar'd,
 Which, if heaven frown not, consecrate thee Druid:
 See to the altar's base the victims led,
 From whose free-gushing blood ourself shall read
 Its high behests; which if assenting found,
 These hands around thy chosen limbs shall wrap
 The vest of sanctity; while at the act
 Yon white-rob'd bards, sweeping their solemn harps,
 Shall lift their choral warblings to the skies,
 And call the gods to witness. Mean while, Prince,
 Bethink thee well, if ought on this vain earth
 Still holds too firm an union with thy soul,
 Estranging it from peace.

C A R A C T A C U S.

I had a queen:

Bear with my weakness, Druid! this tough breast

Must heave a sigh, for she is unreveng'd.
 And can I taste true peace, she unreveng'd?
 So chaste, so lov'd a queen? ah, Evelina!
 Hang not thus weeping on the feeble arm
 That could not save thy mother.

E V E L I N A.

To hang thus
 Softens the pang of grief; and the sweet thought,
 That a fond father still supports his child,
 Sheds, on my pensive mind, such soothing balm,
 As doth the blessing of these pious seers,
 When most they wish our welfare. Would to heaven
 A daughter's presence could as much avail,
 To ease her father's woes, as his doth mine.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Ever most gentle! come unto my bosom:
 Dear pattern of the precious prize I lost,
 Lost, so inglorious lost; my friends, these eyes
 Did see her torn from my defenceless camp;
 Whilst I, hemm'd round by squadrons, could not save
 her:

My boy, still nearer to the darling pledge,
 Beheld her shrieking in the ruffian's arm;
 Beheld, and fled.

E V E L I N A.

Ah! Sir, forbear to wound
 My brother's fame; he fled, but to recall
 His scatter'd forces to pursue and save her.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Daughter, he fled. Now, by yon gracious moon,

C A R A C T A C U S.

That rising saw the deed, and instant hid
Her blushing face in twilight's dusky veil,
The flight was parricide.

E V E L I N A.

Indeed, indeed,

I know him valiant; and not doubt he fell
'Mid slaughter'd thousands of the haughty foe,
Victim to filial love. Arviragus,
Thou hadst no sister near the bloody field,
Whose sorrowing search, led by yon orb of night,
Might find thy body; wash with tears thy wounds;
And wipe them with her hair.

C H O R U S.

Peace, virgin, peace;

Nor thou, sad prince, reply; whate'er he is,
Be he a captive, fugitive, or corse,
He is what heaven ordain'd: these holy groves
Permit no exclamation 'gainst heaven's will
To violate their echoes: Patience, here,
Her meek hands folded on her modest breast,
In mute submission lifts the adoring eye,
Even to the storm that wrecks her.

E V E L I N A.

Holy Druid,

If ought my erring tongue has said pollutes
This sacred place, I from my soul abjure it.
And will these lips bar with eternal silence,
Rather than speak a word, or act a deed
Unmeet for thy sage daughters; blessing first
This hallow'd hour, that takes me from the world,

And joins me to their sober sisterhood.

C H O R U S.

'Tis wisely said. See, Prince, this prudent maid;
Now, while the ruddy flame of sparkling youth
Glow's on her beauteous cheek, can quit the world
Without a sigh, whilst thou—

C A R A C T A C U S.

Would save my queen

From a base ravisher; would wish to plunge
This falchion in his breast, and so avenge
Insulted royalty. Oh holy men!
Ye are the sons of piety and peace;
Ye never felt the sharp vindictive spur,
That goads the injur'd warrior; the hot tide,
That flushes crimson on the conscious cheek
Of him, who burns for glory; else indeed
Ye much would pity me: would curse the fate
That coops me here inactive in your groves,
Robs me of hope, tells me this trusty steel
Must never cleave one Roman helm again;
Never avenge my queen, nor free my country.

C H O R U S.

'Tis heaven's high will—

C A R A C T A C U S.

I know it, reverend fathers!

'Tis heaven's high will, that these poor aged eyes
Shall never more behold that virtuous woman,
To whom my youth was constant; 'twas heaven's will
To take her from me at that very hour,
When best her love might soothe me; that black hour,

(May memory ever raze it from her records)
When all my squadrons fled, and left their king
Old and defenceless : him, who nine whole years
Had taught them how to conquer : Yes, my friends,
For nine whole years against the sons of rapine
I led my veterans, oft to victory,
Never 'till then to shame. Bear with me, Druid,
I've done : begin the rites.

C H O R U S.

Oh would to heaven
A frame of mind, more fitted to these rites,
Possess thee, Prince! that Resignation meek,
'That dove-ey'd Peace, handmaid of Sanctity,
Approach'd this altar with thee : 'stead of these,
See I not gaunt Revenge, ensanguin'd Slaughter,
And mad Ambition, clinging to thy soul,
Eager to snatch thee back to their domain,
Back to a vain and miserable world ;
Whose misery, and vanity, tho' try'd,
Thou still hold'st dearer than these solemn shades,
Where Quiet reigns with Virtue ? Try we yet
What Holiness can do ! for much it can :
Much is the potency of pious prayer :
And much the sacred influence convey'd
By sage mysterious office : when the soul,
Snatch'd by the power of music from her cell
Of fleshly thralldom, feels herself upborn
On plumes of extacy, and boldly springs,
'Mid swelling harmonies and pealing hymns,
Up to the porch of heaven. Strike, then, ye Bards!

Strike all your strings symphonious; wake a strain
 May penetrate, may purge, may purify,
 His yet unhallow'd bosom; call ye hither
 The airy tribe, that on yon mountain dwell,
 Even on majestic Snowdon: they, who never
 Deign visit mortal men, save on some cause
 Of highest import, but, sublimely shrin'd
 On its hoar top in domes of crystalline ice,
 Hold converse with those spirits, that possess
 The skies pure sapphire, nearest heaven itself.

O D E.

I. 1.

Mona on Snowdon calls:

Hear, thou King of mountains, hear;
 Hark, she speaks from all her strings;
 Hark, her loudest echo rings;
 King of mountains, bend thine ear:
 Send thy spirits, send them soon,
 Now, when Midnight and the Moon
 Meet upon thy front of snow:
 See, their gold and ebon rod,
 Where the sober sisters nod,
 And greet in whispers sage and slow.
 Snowdon mark! 'tis Magic's hour;
 Now the mutter'd spell hath power;
 Power to rend thy ribs of rock,
 And burst thy base with thunder's shock;
 But to thee no ruder spell
 Shall Mona use, than those that dwell

In music's secret cells, and lie
Steep'd in the stream of harmony.

I. 2.

Snowdon has heard the strain:
Hark, amid the wondering grove
Other harpings answer clear,
Other voices meet our ear,
Pinions flutter, shadows move,
Busy murmurs hum around,
Rustling vestments brush the ground;
Round, and round, and round they go,
'Thro' the twilight, thro' the shade,
Mount the oak's majestic head,
And gild the tufted mistletoe.
Cease, ye glittering race of light,
Close your wings, and check your flight:
Here, arrang'd in order due,
Spread your robes of saffron hue;
For lo, with more than mortal fire,
Mighty Mador smites the lyre:
Hark, he sweeps the master-strings;
Listen all—

C H O R U S.

Break off; a sullen smoke involves the altar;
The central oak doth shake; I hear the sound
Of steps profane: Caractacus, retire;
Bear hence the victims; Mona is polluted.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Father, as we did watch the eastern side,

We spied and instant seiz'd two stranger youths,
 Who, in the bottom of a shadowy dell,
 Held earnest converse : Britons do they seem,
 And of Brigantian race.

C H O R U S.

Haste, drag them hither.

VELLINUS, ELIDURUS, CHORUS.

E L I D U R U S.

Oh spare, ye sage and venerable Druids!
 Your countrymen and sons.

C H O R U S.

And are ye Britons?

Unheard of profanation : Rome herself,
 Even impious Rome, whom conquest makes more im-
 pious,

Would not have dar'd so rashly. Oh ! for words,
 Big with the fiercest force of execration,
 To blast the deed, and doers.

E L I D U R U S.

Spare the curse,

Oh spare our youth !

C H O R U S.

Is it not now the hour,
 The holy hour, when to the cloudless height
 Of yon star concave climbs the full-orb'd moon,
 And to this nether world in solemn stillness
 Gives sign, that to the listening ear of Heaven
 Religion's voice should plead ? The very babe

Knows this, and, chance awake, his little hands
 Lifts to the gods, and on his innocent couch
 Calls down a blessing. Shall your manly years
 Plead ignorance, and impiously presume
 To tread, with vile unconsecrated feet,
 On Mona's hallow'd plain? know, wretches, know,
 At any hour such boldness is a crime,
 At this 'tis sacrilege.

VELLINUS.

Were Mona's plain
 More hallow'd still, hallow'd as is Heaven's self,
 The cause might plead our pardon.

ELIDURUS.

Mighty Druid!

True, we have rashly dar'd, yet forc'd by duty,
 Our sovereign's mandate—

VELLINUS.

Elder by my birth,
 Brother, I claim, in right of eldership,
 To open our high embassy.

CHORUS.

Speak then;
 But see thy words answer in honest weight
 To this proud prelude. Youth! they must be weighty,
 To atone for such a crime.

VELLINUS.

If then to give
 New nerves to vanquish'd valour; if to do,
 What, with the blessing of the Gods, may save
 A bleeding country from oppression's sword,

Be weighty business, know, on our commission,
And on its hop'd success, that weight depends.

C H O R U S.

Declare it then at once, briefly and boldly.

V E L L I N U S.

Caractacus is here.

C H O R U S.

Say'st thou, proud boy?

'Tis boldly said, and, grant 'twere truly said,
Think'st thou he were not here from fraud or force
As safe, as in a camp of conquerors?
Here, youth, he would be guarded by the Gods;
Their own high hostage; and each sacred hair
Of his selected head, would in these caverns
Sleep with the unsunn'd silver of the mine,
As precious and as safe; record the time,
When Mona e'er betray'd the hapless wretch,
That made her groves his refuge.

V E L L I N U S.

Holy Druid!

Think not so harshly of our enterprise.
Can force, alas! dwell in our unarm'd hands?
Can fraud in our young bosoms? No, dread seer,
Our business told, I trust thou'lt soon disclaim
The vain suspicion; and thy holy ear
(Be brave Caractacus or here or absent)
Shall instant learn it. From the north we come;
The sons of her, whose heaven-entrusted sway
Blesses the bold Brigantes; men who firmly

Have three long moons withstood those Roman
powers,

Which, led by fell Ostorius, still assail
Our frontiers: yet so oft have our stout swords
Repell'd their hot assault, that now, like falcons,
They hang suspended, loath to quit their prey,
Nor daring yet to seize it. Such the state
Of us and Rome; in which our prudent mother,
Revolving what might best secure her country
From this impending ruin, gave us charge
To seek the great Caractacus, and call
His valour to her aid, to lead her bands,
To fight the cause of liberty and Britain,
And quell these ravagers.

[Caractacus starts from behind the altar.

CARACTACUS, VELLINUS, ELIDURUS,
CHORUS.

C A R A C T A C U S.

And ye have found me;
Friends, ye have found me: lead me to your Queen,
And the last purple drop in these old veins
Shall fall for her and Britain.

C H O R U S.

Rash, rash Prince!

V E L L I N U S.

Ye blest immortal powers! is this the man,
The more than man, who for nine bloody years
Withstood all Rome? He is; that warlike front,

Seam'd o'er with honest scars, proclaims he is:
 Kneel, brother, kneel, while in his royal hand
 We lodge the signet: this, in pledge of faith,
 Great Cartismandua sends, and with it tells thee
 She has a nobler pledge than this behind;
 Thy Queen—

C A R A C T A C U S.

Guideria!

V E L L I N U S.

Safely with our Mother.

C A R A C T A C U S.

How, when, where rescu'd? mighty Gods, I thank ye;
 For it is true, this signet speaks it true.
 Oh tell me briefly.

V E L L I N U S.

In a fally, Prince,

Which, wanting abler chiefs, my gracious mother
 Committed to my charge, our troops assail'd
 One outwork of the camp; the mask of night
 Favour'd our arms, and there my happy hand
 Was doom'd with other prisoners to release
 The captive matron.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Let me clasp thee, youth,

And thou shalt be my son: I had one, stranger,
 Just of thy years; he look'd like thee right honest;
 Had just that freeborn boldness on his brow,
 And yet he fail'd me. Were it not for him,
 Who, as thou seest, even at this hour of joy,
 Draws tears down mine old cheek, I were as blest

As the great gods. Oh, he has all disgrac'd
His high-born ancestry! But I'll forget him.
Haste, Evelina, barb my knotty spear,
Bind fast this trusty falchion to my thigh,
My bow, my target—

C H O R U S.

Rash Caractacus!

What hast thou done? What dost thou mean to do?

C A R A C T A C U S.

To save my country.

C H O R U S.

To betray thyself.

That thou hast done; the rest thou canst not do,
If Heaven forbids; and of its awful will
Thy fury recks not: Has the bleeding victim
Pour'd a propitious stream? the milk-white steeds
Unrein'd and neighing pranc'd with favouring steps?
Say, when these youths approach'd, did not a gust
Of livid smoke involve the bickering flame?
Did not the forest tremble? every omen
Led thee to doubt their honesty of purpose;
And yet, before their tongues could tell that purpose,
Ere I had tender'd, as our laws ordain,
Their test of faith, thy rudeness rush'd before me,
Infringing my just rights.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Druid, methinks,

At such a time, in such a cause, Reproof
Might bate its sternness. Now, by Heaven, I feel,
Beyond all omens, that within my breast,

Which marshals me to conquest; something here
That snatches me beyond all mortal fears,
Lifts me to where upon her jasper throne
Sits flame-rob'd Victory, who calls me son,
And crowns me with a palm, whose deathless green
Shall bloom when Caesar's fades.

C H O R U S.

Vain confidence!

C A R A C T A C U S.

Yet I submit in all—

C H O R U S.

'Tis meet thou should'st.

Thou art a King, a sovereign o'er frail man;
I am a Druid, servant of the Gods;
Such service is above such sovereignty,
As well thou know'st: if they should prompt these lips
To interdict the thing thou dar'st to do,
What would avail thy daring?

C A R A C T A C U S.

Holy man!

But thou wilt bless it; Heaven will bid thee bless it;
Thou know'st that, when we fight to save our country,
We fight the cause of Heaven. The man that falls,
Falls hallow'd; falls a victim for the Gods;
For them and for their altars.

C H O R U S.

Valiant Prince!

Think not we lightly rate our country's weal,
Or thee, our country's champion. Well we know
The glorious meed of those exalted souls,

Who flame like thee for freedom : mark me, Prince,
 The time will come, when Destiny and Death,
 Thron'd in a burning car, the thundering wheels
 Arm'd with gigantic scythes of adamant,
 Shall scour this field of life : and in the rear
 The fiend Oblivion : kingdoms, empires, worlds
 Melt in the general blaze : when, lo, from high
 Andraсте darting, catches from the wreck
 The roll of fame, claps her ascending plumes,
 And stamps on orient stars each patriot name,
 Round her eternal dome.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Speak ever thus,
 And I will hear thee, 'till attention faint
 In heedless extacy.

C H O R U S.

This tho' we know,
 Let man beware with headlong zeal to rush
 Where slaughter calls; it is not courage, Prince,
 No nor the pride and practis'd skill in arms,
 That gains this meed : the warrior is no patriot,
 Save when, obsequious to the will of Heaven,
 He draws the sword of vengeance.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Surely, Druid,
 Such fair occasion speaks the will of Heaven—

C H O R U S.

Monarch, perchance thou hast a fair occasion :
 But, if thou hast, the Gods will soon declare it :
 Their sovereign will thou know'st not ; this to learn

Demands our search. Ye mortals all retire!
 Leave ye the grove to us and Inspiration;
 Nor let a step, or even one glance profane,
 Steal from your caverns: stay, my holy brethren,
 Ye time-ennobled Seers, whose reverend brows
 Full eighty winters whiten; you, ye Bards,
 Leoline, Cadwall, Hoel, Cantaber,
 Attend upon our slumbers: Wondrous men,
 Ye, whose skill'd fingers know how best to lead,
 Thro' all the maze of sound, the wayward step
 Of Harmony, recalling oft, and oft
 Permitting her unbridled course to rush
 Thro' dissonance to concord, sweetest then
 Even when expected harshest. Mador, thou
 Alone shalt lift thy voice; no choral peal
 Shall drown thy solemn warblings; thou best know'st
 That opiate charm which lulls corporeal sense:
 Thou hast the key, great Bard! that best can open
 The portal of the soul; unlock it straight,
 And lead the pensive pilgrim on her way,
 Through the vast regions of futurity.

[Exeunt Caractacus, Vellinus, &c.]

C H O R U S.

O D E.

I. 1.

Hail, thou harp of Phrygian frame!

In years of yore that Camber bore
 From Troy's sepulchral flame;

With ancient Brute, to Britain's shore
 The mighty minstrel came:

Sublime upon the burnish'd prow,
He bade thy manly modes to flow;
Britain heard the descant bold,
She flung her white arms o'er the sea;
Proud in her leafy bosom to enfold
The freight of harmony.

I. 2.

Mute 'till then was every plain,
Save where the flood o'er mountains rude
Tumbled his tide amain :
And Echo from the impending wood
Resounded the hoarse strain;
While from the north the sullen gale
With hollow whistlings shook the vale;
Difinal notes, and answer'd soon
By savage howl the heaths among,
What time the wolf doth bay the trembling moon,
And thin the bleating throng.

I. 3.

Thou spak'st, imperial Lyre,
The rough roar ceas'd, and airs from high
Lapt the land in extacy :
Fancy, the fairy, with thee came;
And Inspiration, bright-ey'd dame,
Oft at thy call would leave her sapphire sky;
And, if not vain the verse presumes,
Even now some chaste Divinity is near:
For lo! the sound of distant plumes
Pants thro' the pathless desert of the air.

'Tis not the flight of her ;
 'Tis Sleep, her dewy harbinger;
 Change, my harp, Oh change thy measures;
 Cull, from thy mellifluous treasures,
 Notes that steal on even feet,
 Ever slow, yet never pausing,
 Mixt with many a warble sweet,
 In a ling'ring cadence closing,
 While the pleas'd power sinks gently down the skies,
 And seals with hand of down the Druid's slumbering

H. 1.

[eyes.

Thrice I pause, and thrice I sound
 The central string, and now I ring
 (By measur'd lore profound)
 A sevenfold chime, and sweep, and swing
 Above, below, around,
 To mix thy music with the spheres,
 That warble to immortal ears.
 Inspiration hears the call;
 She rises from her throne above,
 And, sudden as the glancing meteors fall,
 She comes, she fills the grove.

H. 2.

High her port; her waving hand
 A pencil bears; the days, the years,
 Arise at her command,
 And each obedient colouring wears.
 Lo, where Time's pictur'd band
 In hues ethereal glide along;
 Oh mark the transitory throng;

Now they dazzle, now they die,
 Instant they flit from light to shade,
 Mark the blue forms of faint futurity,
 Oh mark them ere they fade.

II. 3.

Whence was that inward groan?
 Why bursts thro' closed lids the tear?
 Why uplifts the bristling hair
 Its white and venerable shade?
 Why down the consecrated head
 Courses in chilly drops the dew of fear?
 All is not well, the pale-ey'd moon
 Curtains her head in clouds, the stars retire,
 Save from the sultry south alone,
 The swart star flings his pestilential fire;
 Even sleep herself will fly,
 If not recall'd by harmony.
 Wake, my lyre! thy softest numbers,
 Such as nurse extatic slumbers,
 Sweet as tranquil virtue feels
 When the toil of life is ending,
 While from the earth the spirit steals,
 And, on new-born plumes ascending,
 Hastens to lave in the bright fount of day,
 'Till Destiny prepare a shrine of purer clay.
 [The Druid waking, speaks.

C H O R U S.

It may not be. Avaunt terrific axe;
 Why hangs thy bright edge glaring o'er the grove?
 Oh for a giant's nerve to ward the stroke!

It bows, it falls.

Where am I? hush, my soul!

'Twas all a dream. Resume no more the strain:

The hour is past: my brethren! what ye saw,

(If what ye saw, as by your looks, I read,
Bore like ill-omen'd shape) hold it in silence.

The midnight air falls chilly on my breast;

And now I shiver, now a feverish glow

Scorches my vitals. Hark, some step approaches.

E V E L I N A, C H O R U S.

E V E L I N A.

Thus, with my wayward fears, to burst unbidden

On your dread synod, rousing, as ye seem,

From holy trance, appears a desperate deed,

Even to the wretch who dares it.

C H O R U S.

Virgin! quickly

Pronounce the cause.

E V E L I N A.

Bear with a simple maid

Too prone to fear, perchance my fears are vain.

C H O R U S.

Eut yet declare them.

E V E L I N A.

I suspect me much

The faith of these Brigantes.

C H O R U S.

Say'st thou, Virgin?

Heed what thou say'st; Suspicion is a guest

That in the breast of man, of wrathful man,
Too oft' his welcome finds; yet seldom sure
In that submissive calm that smooths the mind
Of maiden innocence.

E V E L I N A.

I know it well:

Yet must I still distrust the elder stranger:
For while he talks, (and much the flatterer talks)
His brother's silent carriage gives disproof
Of all his boast: indeed I mark'd it well;
And, as my father with the elder held
Bold speech and warlike, as is still his wont
When fir'd with hope of conquest, oft I saw
A sigh unbidden heave the younger's breast,
Half check'd as it was rais'd; sometimes, methought,
His gentle eye would cast a glance on me,
As if he pitied me; and then again
Would fasten on my father, gazing there
To veneration; then he'd sigh again,
Look on the ground, and hang his modest head
Most pensively.

C H O R U S.

This may demand, my brethren,
More serious search: Virgin, proceed.

E V E L I N A.

'Tis true,

My father, rapt in high heroic zeal,
His every thought big with his country's freedom,
Heeds not the different carriage of these brethren,
The elder takes him wholly; yet, methinks,

The younger's manners have I know not what,
 That speaks him far more artless. This besides,
 Is it not strange, if, as the tale reports,
 My mother sojourns with this distant Queen,
 She should not send or to my fire, or me,
 Some fond remembrance of her love? ah! none,
 With tears I speak it, none, not her dear blessing
 Has reach'd my longing ears.

C H O R U S.

The Gods, my brethren,
 Have wak'd these doubts in the untainted breast
 Of this mild maiden; oft to female softness,
 Oft to the purity of virgin souls
 Doth Heaven its voluntary light dispense,
 When victims bleed in vain. They must be spies.
 Hie thee, good Cantaber, and to our presence
 Summon the young Brigantian.

E V E L I N A.

Do not that,
 Or, if ye do, ye treat him nothing sternly:
 The softest terms from such a tender breast
 Will draw confession, and, if ye shall find
 The treason ye suspect, forbear to curse him.
 (Not that my weakness means to guide your wisdom)
 Yet, as I think he would not wittingly
 E'er do a deed of baseness, were it granted
 That I might question him, my heart forbodes
 It more could gain by gentleness and prayers,
 Than will the fiercest threats.

C H O R U S.

Perchance it may :

And quickly shalt thou try. But see the King!
And with him both the youths.

E V E L I N A.

Alas! my fears

Forewent my errand, else had I inform'd thee
That therefore did I come, and from my father
To gain admision. Mark the younger, Druid,
How sad he seems; oft did he in the cave
So fold his arms—

C H O R U S.

We mark him much, and much
The elder's free and dreadless confidence.
Virgin, retire awhile in yonder vale,
Nor, till thy royal father quits the grove,
Resume thy station here.

[Exit Evelina.

C A R A C T A C U S, C H O R U S, V E L L I N U S,
E L I D U R U S.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Forgive me, Druid!

My eager soul no longer could sustain
The pangs of expectation; hence I sent
The virgin innocence of Evelina,
Safest to break upon your privacy :
She not return'd, Oh pardon! that uncall'd
I follow : the great cause, I trust, absolves me :

C A R A C T A C U S.

'Tis your's, 'tis freedom's, 'tis the cause of Heaven;
And sure Heaven owns it such.

C H O R U S.

Caractacus,

All that by sage and sanctimonious rites
Might of the Gods be ask'd, we have essay'd;
And yet nor to our wish, nor to their wont,
Gave they benign assent.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Death to our hopes!

C H O R U S.

While yet we lay in sacred slumber trac'd,
Sullen and sad to fancy's frightened eye
Did shapes of dun and murky hue advance,
In train tumultuous, all of gesture strange,
And passing horrible; starting we wak'd,
Yet felt no waking calm; still all was dark,
Still rang our tinkling ears with screams of woe.
Suspicious tremors still—

V E L L I N U S.

Of what suspicious?

Druid, our Queen—

C H O R U S.

Restrain thy wayward tongue,
Insolent youth! in such licentious mood
To interrupt our speech ill futes thy years,
And worse our sanctity.

C A R A C T A C U S.

'Tis his distress

Makes him forget, what else his reverent zeal

Would pay ye holily. Think what he feels,
 Poor youth, who fears yon moon, before she wanes,
 May see his country conquer'd; see his mother
 The victor's slave, her royal blood debas'd,
 Dragging her chains thro' the throng'd streets of Rome,
 To grace oppression's triumph. Horrid thought!
 Say, can it be that he, whose strenuous youth
 Adds vigour to his virtue, e'er can bear
 This patiently? he comes to ask my aid,
 And, that withheld, (as now he needs must fear)
 What means, alas! are left? search Britain round,
 What chief dares cope with Rome? what king but holds
 His loan of power at a Proconsul's will,
 At best a scepter'd slave?

V E L L I N U S.

Yes, Monarch, yes,
 If Heaven restrains thy formidable sword,
 Or to its stroke denies that just success
 Which Heaven alone can give, I fear me much
 Our Queen, ourselves, nay Britain's self, must perish.

C A R A C T A C U S.

But is not this a fear makes Virtue vain?
 Tears from yon ministring regents of the sky
 Their right? Plucks from firm-handed Providence,
 The golden reins of sublunary sway,
 And gives them to blind Chance? If this be so,
 If Tyranny must lord it o'er the earth,
 There's Anarchy in Heaven. Nay, frown not, Druid,
 I do not think 'tis thus.

C A R A C T A C U S.

C H O R U S.

We trust thou do'st not.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Masters of Wisdom! No: my soul confides
In that all-healing, and all-forming Power,
Who, on the radiant day when Time was born,
Cast his broad eye upon the wild of ocean,
And calm'd it with a glance: then, plunging deep,
His mighty arm, pluck'd from its dark domain
This throne of Freedom, lifted it to light,
Girt it with silver cliffs, and call'd it Britain:
He did, and will preserve it.

C H O R U S.

Pious Prince,

In that all-healing and all-forming Power
Still let thy soul confide; but not in men,
No, not in these, ingenuous as they seem,
'Till they are try'd by that high test of faith
Our ancient laws ordain.

V E L L I N U S.

Illustrious Seer,

Methinks our Sovereign's signet well might plead
Her envoy's faith. Thy pardon, mighty Druid,
Not for ourselves, but for our Queen we plead;
Mistrusting us, ye wound her honour.

C H O R U S.

Peace;

Our will admits no parley. Thither, youths,
Turn your astonish'd eyes; behold yon huge
And unhewn sphere of living adamant,

Which, pois'd by magic, rests its central weight
On yonder pointed rock : firm as it seems,
Such is its strange and virtuous property,
Its moves obsequious to the gentlest touch
Of him, whose breast is pure ; but to a traitor,
Tho' even a giant's prowess nerv'd his arm,
It stands as fixt as Snowdon. No reply ;
The Gods command that one of you must now
Approach and try it : in your snowy vests,
Ye Priests, involve the lots, and to the younger,
As is our wont, tender the choice of Fate.

E L I D U R U S.

Heavens! is it fallen on me?

C H O R U S.

Young Prince, it is;

Prepare thee for thy trial.

E L I D U R U S.

Gracious Gods!

Who may look up to your tremendous thrones,
And say his breast is pure? All-searching Powers,
Ye know already how and what I am;
And what ye mean to publish me in Mona,
To that I yield and tremble.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Rouse thee, Youth!

And, with that courage honest Truth supplies,
(For sure ye both are true) haste to the trial;
Behold I lead thee on.

C H O R U S.

Prince, we arrest

Thy hasty step; to witness this high test
 Pertains to us alone. Awhile retire,
 And in yon cave his brother be thy charge;
 The trial past, again we will confer,
 Touching that part which Heaven's deciding choice
 Wills thee to act.

[Exeunt Caractacus and Vellinus.

C H O R U S, E L I D U R U S.

C H O R U S.

Now be the rites prepar'd:
 And, now, ye Bards, chaunt ye that custom'd hymn,
 The prelude of this fam'd solemnity.

O D E.

I. 1.

Thou Spirit pure, that spread'st unseen
 Thy pinions o'er this ponderous sphere,
 And, breathing thro' each rigid vein,
 Fill'st with stupendous life the marble mass,
 And bid'st it bow upon its base,
 When sovereign Truth is near;
 Spirit invisible! to thee
 We swell the solemn harmony;
 Hear us, and aid:
 Thou, that in Virtue's cause
 O'er-rulest Nature's laws,
 Oh hear, and aid with influence high
 The sons of Peace and Piety.

I. 2.

First-born of that ethereal tribe
Call'd into birth ere time or place,
Whom wave nor wind can circumscribe,
Heirs of the liquid liberty of Light,
That float on rainbow pennons bright
Thro' all the wilds of space;
Yet thou alone of all thy kind
Canst range the regions of the mind,
Thou only know'st
That dark meandering maze,
Where wayward Falshood strays,
And, seizing swift the lurking sprite,
Forces her forth to shame and light.

I. 3.

Thou canst enter the dark cell
Where the vulture Conscience slumbers,
And, unarm'd by charming spell,
Or magic numbers,
Canst rouse her from her formidable sleep,
And bid her dart her raging talons deep;
Yet, ah! too seldom doth the furious fiend
Thy bidding wait; vindictive, self prepar'd,
She knows her torturing time; too sure to rend
The trembling heart, when Virtue quits her guard.
Pause then, celestial guest!
And, brooding on thine adamantine sphere,
If fraud approach, Spirit, that fraud declare;
To Conscience and to Mona leave the rest.

C H O R U S.

Heard'st thou the awful invocation, Youth,

Wrapt in those holy harpings?

ELIDURUS.

Sage, I did;

And it came o'er my soul as doth the thunder,
While distant yet, with an expected burst,
It threatens the trembling ear. Now to the trial.

CHORUS.

Ere that, bethink thee well what rigorous doom
Attends thine act, if failing, certain death :
So certain, that in our absolving tongues
Rests not that power may save thee : Thou must die.

EVELINA, ELIDURUS, CHORUS.

EVELINA.

Die, say'st thou? Druid!

ELIDURUS.

Evelina here!

Lead to the rock.

CHORUS.

No, Youth, awhile we spare thee;

And, in our stead, permit this royal maiden
To urge thee first with virgin gentleness;
Respect our clemency, and meet her questions
With answers prompt and true; so may'st thou 'scape
A sterner trial.

ELIDURUS.

Rather to the rock.—

EVELINA.

Dost thou disdain me, Prince? Lost as I am,

Methinks the daughter of Caractacus
Might merit milder treatment : I was born
To royal hopes and promise, nurs'd i'th'lap
Of soft prosperity ; alas the change !
I meant but to address a few brief words
To this young Prince, and he doth turn his eye,
And scorns to answer me.

E L I D U R U S.

Scorn thee, sweet Maid ?

No, 'tis the fear—

E V E L I N A.

And canst thou fear me, Youth ?

Even while I led a life of royalty,
I bore myself to all with meek deportment,
In nothing harsh, or cruel : and, howe'er
Misfortune works upon the minds of men,
(For some they say it turns to very stone)
Mine I am sure it softens. Wert thou guilty,
Yet I should pity thee ; nay, wert thou leagu'd
To load this suffering heart with more misfortunes,
Still should I pity thee ; nor e'er believe
Thou wouldst, on free and voluntary choice,
Betray the innocent.

E L I D U R U S.

Indeed I would not.

E V E L I N A.

No, gracious Youth, I do believe thou would'st not :
For on thy brow the liberal hand of Heaven
Has pourtray'd Truth as visible and bold,
As were the pictur'd suns that deckt the brows

Of our brave ancestors. Say then, young Prince,
 (For therefore have I wish'd to question thee)
 Bring ye no token of a mother's fondness
 To her expecting child? Gentle thou seem'st,
 And sure that gentleness would prompt thine heart
 To visit, and to soothe with courteous office,
 Distress like her's. A captive and a queen
 Has more than common claim for pity, Prince,
 And even the ills of venerable age
 Were cause enough to move thy tender nature.
 The tears o'ercharge thine eye. Alas, my fears!
 Sicknefs or fore infirmity had seiz'd her,
 Before thou left'st the palace, else her lips
 Had to thy care entrusted some kind message,
 And blest her hapless daughter by thy tongue.
 Would she were here!

E L I D U R U S.

Would Heaven she were!

E V E L I N A.

Ah why?

E L I D U R U S.

Because you wish it.

E V E L I N A.

Thanks, ingenuous Youth,
 For this thy courtesy. Yet, if the Queen
 Thy mother shines with such rare qualities,
 As late thy brother boasted, she will calm
 Her woes, and I shall clasp her aged knees
 Again, in peace and liberty.—Alas!
 He speaks not; all my fears are just.

E L I D U R U S.

What fears?

The Queen Guideria is not dead.

E V E L I N A.

Not dead!

But is she in that happy state of freedom,
Which we are taught to hope? Why sigh'st thou,
Youth?

Thy years have yet been prosperous. Did thy father
E'er lose a kingdom? Did captivity
E'er seize thy shrieking mother? thou can'st go
To yonder cave, and find thy brother safe:
He is not lost, as mine is. Youth, thou sigh'st
Again; thou hast not sure such cause for sorrow;
But if thou hast, give me thy griefs, I pray thee;
I have a heart can softly sympathize,
And sympathy is soothing.

E L I D U R U S.

Oh Gods! Gods!

She tears my soul. What shall I say?

E V E L I N A.

Perchance,

For all in this bad world must have their woes,
Thou too hast thine; and may'st, like me, be wretched.
Haply amid the ruinous waste of war,
'Mid that wild havoc, which those sons of blood
Bring on our groaning country, some chaste maid,
Whose tender soul was link'd by love to thine,
Might fall the trembling prey to Roman rage,
Even at the golden hour, when holy rites

Had seal'd your virtuous vows. If it were so,
Indeed I pity her!

E L I D U R U S.

Not that: not that.

Never 'till now did beauty's matchless beam—
But I am dumb.

E V E L I N A.

Why that dejected eye?

And why this silence? that some weighty grief
O'erhangs thy soul, thy every look proclaims.
Why then refuse it words? The heart, that bleeds
From any stroke of fate or human wrongs,
Loves to disclose itself, that listening pity
May drop a healing tear upon the wound.
'Tis only, when with inbred horror smote
At some base act, or done, or to be done,
That the recoiling soul, with conscious dread,
Shrinks back into itself. But thou, good Youth—

E L I D U R U S.

Cease, royal maid! permit me to depart.—

E V E L I N A.

Yet hear me, stranger! Truth and Secrecy,
Tho' friends, are seldom necessary friends—

E L I D U R U S.

I go to try my truth—

E V E L I N A.

Oh! go not hence,
In wrath; think not, that I suspect thy virtue:
Yet ignorance may oft make virtue slide,
And if—

E L I D U R U S.

In pity spare me.

E V E L I N A.

If thy brother—

Nay, start not, do not turn thine eye from mine;
 Speak, I conjure thee, is his purpose honest?
 I know the guilty price, that barbarous Rome
 Sets on my father's head; and gold, vile gold,
 Has now a charm for Britons: Brib'd by this,
 Should he betray him—Yes, I see thou shudder'st
 At the dire thought; yet not, as if 'twere strange;
 But as our fears were mutual. Ah, young stranger;
 That open face scarce needs a tongue to utter
 What works within. Come then, ingenuous Prince,
 And instant make discovery to the Druid.
 While yet 'tis not too late.

E L I D U R U S.

Ah! what discover?

Say, whom must I betray?

E V E L I N A.

Thy brother.

E L I D U R U S.

Ha!

E V E L I N A.

Who is no brother, if his guilty soul
 Teems with such perfidy. Oh all ye stars!
 Can he be brother to a youth like thee,
 Who would betray an old and honour'd King,
 That King his countryman, and one whose prowess
 Once guarded Britain 'gainst the assailing world?

Can he be brother to a youth like thee,
 Who from a young, defenceless, innocent maid,
 Would take that King her father? Make her suffer
 All that an orphan suffers? More perchance:
 The ruffian foe.—Oh tears, ye choke my utterance!
 Can he be brother to a youth like thee,
 Who would defile his soul by such black deeds?
 It cannot be—And yet, thou still art silent.
 Turn, youth, and see me weep. Ah, see me kneel:
 I am of royal blood, not wont to kneel,
 Yet will I kneel to thee. Oh save my father!
 Save a distressful maiden from the force
 Of barbarous men! Be thou a brother to me,
 For mine alas! hah! [Sees Arviragus entering.

ARVIRAGUS, EVELINA, ELIDURUS,
 CHORUS.

A R V I R A G U S.

Evelina, rise!

Know, maid, I ne'er will tamely see thee kneel,
 Even at the foot of Caesar.

E V E L I N A.

'Tis himself:

And he will prove my father's fears were false,
 False, as his son is brave. Thou best of brothers,
 Come to my arms. Where hast thou been, thou wanderer?

How wer't thou sav'd? Indeed, Arviragus,
 I never shed such tears, since thou wer't lost,

For these are tears of rapture.

A R V I R A G U S.

Evelina!

Fain would I greet thee, as a brother ought :
But wherefore didst thou kneel ?

E V E L I N A.

Oh ! ask not now.

A R V I R A G U S.

By heaven I must, and he must answer me,
Whoe'er he be. What art thou, sullen stranger ?

E L I D U R U S.

A Briton.

A R V I R A G U S.

Brief and bold.

E V E L I N A.

Ah, spare the taunt :

He merits not thy wrath. Behold the Druids;
Lo, they advance : with holy reverence first
Thou must address their sanctity.

A R V I R A G U S.

I will.

But see, proud boy, thou dost not quit the grove,
'Till time allows us parley.

E L I D U R U S.

Prince, I mean not.

A R V I R A G U S.

Sages, and sons of heaven ! Illustrious Druids !
Abruptly I approach your sacred presence :
Yet such dire tidings—

C H O R U S.

On thy peril, peace!

Thou stand'st accus'd, and by a father's voice,
Of crimes abhorr'd, of cowardice and flight;
And therefore may'st not in these sacred groves
Utter polluted accents. Quickly say,
Wherefore thou fled'st? For that base fact unclear'd
We hold no further converse.

A R V I R A G U S.

Oh ye Gods!

Am I the son of your Caractacus?
And could I fly?

C H O R U S.

Waste not or time or words:
But tell us why thou fled'st?

A R V I R A G U S.

I fled not, Druid!

By the great Gods I fled not! Save to stop
Our dastard troops, that basely turn'd their backs.
I stop'd, I rallied them, when lo a shaft
Of random cast did level me with earth,
Where pale and senseless, as the slain around me,
I lay 'till midnight: Then, as from long trance
Awoke, I crawl'd upon my feeble limbs
To a lone cottage, where a pitying hind
Lodg'd me, and nourish'd me. My strength repair'd,
It boots not that I tell, what humble arts
Compell'd I us'd to screen me from the foe.
How now a peasant from a beggarly scrip
I sold cheap food to slaves, that nam'd the price,

Nor after gave it. Now a minstrel poor
 With ill-tun'd harp, and uncouth descant shrill
 I ply'd a thriftless trade, and by such shifts
 Did win obscurity to shroud my name.
 At length to other conquests in the north
 Ostorius led his legions : Safer now,
 Yet not secure, I to some valiant chiefs,
 Whom war had spar'd, discover'd what I was ;
 And with them plann'd, how surest we might draw
 Our scatter'd forces to some rocky fastness
 In rough Caernaïvon, there to breathe in freedom,
 If not with brave incursion to oppress
 The thinly-station'd foe. And soon our art
 So well avail'd, that now at Snowdon's foot
 Full twenty troops of hardy veterans wait
 To call my fire their leader.

C H O R U S.

Valiant youth—

E V E L I N A.

He is—I said he was a valiant youth,
 Nor has he sham'd his race.

C H O R U S.

We do believe

Thy modest tale : And may the righteous Gods
 Thus ever shed upon thy noble breast
 Discretion's cooling dew. When nurtur'd so,
 Then, only then, doth valour bloom mature.

A R V I R A G U S.

Yet vain is valour, howfoe'er it bloom :
 Druid, the Gods frown on us. All my hopes

Are blasted; I shall ne'er rejoin my friends,
 Ne'er blefs them with my father. Holy men,
 I have a tale to tell, will shake your souls.
 Your Mona is invaded; Rome approaches,
 Even to these groves approaches.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Horroure! horroure!

A R V I R A G U S.

Late as I landed on yon highest beach,
 Where nodding from the rocks the poplars fling
 Their scatter'd arms, and dash them in the wave,
 There were their vessels moor'd, as if they sought
 Concealment in the shade, and as I past
 Up yon thick-planted ridge, I spy'd their helms
 'Mid brakes and boughs trench'd in the heath below,
 Where like a nest of night-worms did they glitter,
 Sprinkling the plain with brightness. On I sped
 With silent step, yet oft did pass so near,
 'Twas next to prodigy, I 'scap'd unseen.

C H O R U S.

Their number, Prince?

A R V I R A G U S.

Few, if mine hasty eye
 Did find, and count them all.

C H O R U S.

Oh brethren, brethren,
 Treason and sacrilege, worse foes than Rome,
 Have led Rome hither. Instant seize that wretch,
 And bring him to our presence.

CHORUS, ELIDURUS, ARVIRAGUS.

CHORUS.

Say, thou false one!

What doom befits the slave, who sells his country?

ELIDURUS.

Death, sudden death!

CHORUS.

No, lingering piece-meal death;

And to such death thy brother and thyself

We now devote. Villain, thy deeds are known;

'Tis known, ye led the impious Romans hither

To slaughter us even on our holy altars.

ELIDURUS.

That on my soul doth lie some secret grief,

These looks perforce will tell: It is not fear,

Druids, it is not fear that shakes me thus;

The great Gods know, it is not: Ye can never:

For, what tho' wisdom lifts ye next those gods,

Ye cannot, like to them, unlock men's breasts,

And read their inmost thoughts. Ah! that ye could.

ARVIRAGUS.

What hast thou done?

ELIDURUS.

What, Prince, I will not tell.

CHORUS.

Wretch, there are means—

ELIDURUS.

I know, and terrible means;

Are blasted; I shall ne'er rejoin my friends,
 Ne'er blest them with my father. Holy men,
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ELIDURUS.

What, Prince, I will not tell.

CHORUS.

Wretch, there are means—

ELIDURUS.

I know, and terrible means;

And 'tis both fit, that you should try those means,
And I endure them: Yet I think, my patience
Will for some space baffle your torturing fury.

C H O R U S.

Be that best known, when our inflicted goads
Harrow thy flesh!

A R V I R A G U S.

Stranger, ere this is try'd
Confess the whole of thy black perfidy;
So black, that when I look upon thy youth,
Read thy mild eye, and mark thy modest brow,
I think indeed, thou durst not.

E L I D U R U S.

Such a crime
Indeed I durst not; and would rather be
The very wretch thou seest. I'll speak no more.

C H O R U S.

Brethren, 'tis so. The virgin's thoughts were just:
This youth has been deceiv'd.

E L I D U R U S.

Yes, one word more.
You say, the Romans have invaded Mona.
Give me a sword and twenty honest Britons,
And I will quell those Romans. Vain demand!
Alas! you cannot: Ye are men of peace:
Religion's self forbids. Lead then to torture.

A R V I R A G U S.

Now on my soul this youth doth move me much.

C H O R U S.

Think not Religion and our holy office

Doth teach us tamely, like the bleating lamb,
 To crouch before oppression, and with neck
 Outstretch'd await the stroke. Mistaken boy!
 Did not strict justice claim thee for her victim,
 We might full safely send thee to these Romans,
 Inviting their hot charge. Know, when I blow
 That sacred trumpet bound with sable fillets
 To yonder branching oak, the awful sound
 Calls forth a thousand Britons train'd alike
 In holy and in martial exercise,
 Not by such mode and rule, as Romans use,
 But of that fierce portentous horrible sort,
 As shall appall even Romans.

E L I D U R U S.

Gracious gods!

Then there are hopes indeed. Oh call them instant,
 This Prince will lead them on: I'll follow him,
 Tho' in my chains, and some way dash them round
 To harm the haughty foe.

A R V I R A G U S.

A thousand Britons,

And arm'd! Oh instant blow the sacred trump,
 And let me head them. Yet methinks this youth—

C H O R U S.

I know what thou would'st say, might join thee, Prince.
 True, were he free from crime, or had confest.

E L I D U R U S.

Confest. Ah, think not, I will e'er—

A R V I R A G U S.

Reflect.

Either thyself or brother must have wrong'd us:
Then why conceal—

E L I D U R U S.

Hast thou a brother? no!

Else hadst thou spar'd the word; and yet a sister
Lovely as thine might more than teach thee, Prince,
What 'tis to have a brother. Hear me, Druids,
'Tho' I would prize an hour of freedom now
Before an age of any after date:
'Tho' I would seize it as the gift of heaven,
And use it as heaven's gift: yet do not think,
I so will purchase it. Give it me freely,
I yet will spurn the boon, and hug my chains,
'Till you do swear by your own hoary heads,
My brother shall be safe.

C H O R U S.

Excellent youth!

Thy words do speak thy soul, and such a soul,
As wakes our wonder. Thou art free; thy brother
Shall be thine honour's pledge! so will we use him,
As thou art false or true.

E L I D U R U S.

I ask no other.

A R V I R A G U S.

Thus then, my fellow-soldier, to thy clasp
I give the band of friendship. Noble youth,
We'll speed, or die together.

C H O R U S.

Hear us, Prince!

Mona permits not, that he fight her battles,

Till duly purified: For tho' his soul
 Took up unwittingly this deed of baseness,
 Yet is lustration meet. Learn, that in vice
 There is a noisome rankness unperceiv'd
 By gross corporeal sense, which so offends
 Heaven's pure divinities, as us the stench
 Of vapour wafted from sulphureous pool,
 Or poisonous weed obscene. Hence doth the man,
 Who even converses with a villain, need
 As much purgation, as the pallid wretch
 Scap'd from the walls, where frowning pestilence
 Spreads wide her livid banners. For this cause,
 Ye Priests, conduct the youth to yonder grove,
 And do the needful rites. Meanwhile ourself
 Will lead thee, Prince, unto thy father's presence.—
 But hold, the King comes forth.

[Exeunt Priests with Elidurus.

CARACTACUS, ARVIRAGUS, CHORUS,
 EVELINA.

C A R A C T A C U S.

My son, my son!

What joy, what transport, doth thine aged fire
 Feel in these filial foldings! Speak not, boy,
 Nor interrupt that heart-felt extacy
 Should strike us mute. I know what thou wouldst say,
 Yet prithee, peace. Thy sister's voice hath clear'd thee;
 And could excuse find words at this blest moment,
 Trust me, I'd give it vent. But, 'tis enough,

Thy father welcomes thee to him and honour :
 Honour, that now with rapturous certainty
 Calls thee his own true offspring. Dost thou weep?
 Ah, if thy tears swell not from joy's free spring,
 I beg thee, spare them : I have done thee wrong,
 Can make thee no atonement : None, alas!
 Thy father scarce can bless thee, as he ought ;
 Unblest himself, beset with foes around,
 Bereft of queen, of kingdom, and of soldiers,
 He can but give thee portion of his dangers,
 Perchance and of his chains : Yet droop not, boy,
 Virtue is still thine own.

A R V I R A G U S.

It is, my father ;
 Pure as from thine illustrious fount it came ;
 And that unfullied : Let the world oppress us ;
 Let fraud and falshood rivet fetters on us ;
 Still shall our souls be free : Yet hope is ours,
 As well as virtue.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Spoken like a Briton.

True, hope is ours, and therefore let's prepare :
 The moments now are precious. Tell us, Druid,
 Is it not meet, we see the bands drawn out,
 And mark their due array ?

C H O R U S.

Monarch, even now
 They skirt the grove.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Then let us to their front—

C H O R U S.

But is the traitor-youth in safety lodg'd?

C A R A C T A C U S.

Druid, he fled—

C H O R U S.

Oh fatal flight to Mona!

C A R A C T A C U S.

But what of that? Arviragus is here,
My son is here, let then the traitor go,
By this he has join'd the Romans: Let him join them;
A single arm, and that a villain's arm,
Can lend but little aid to any powers
Oppos'd to truth and virtue. Come, my son,
Let's to the troops, and marshall them with speed.
That done, we from these venerable men
Will claim their ready blessing: Then to battle;
And the swift sun even at his purple dawn
Shall spy us crown'd with conquest, or with death.

[Exeunt Caractacus and Arviragus.]

C H O R U S, E V E L I N A.

C H O R U S.

What may his flight portend! Say, Evelina,
How came this youth to 'scape?

E V E L I N A.

And that to tell

Will fix much blame on my impatient folly:
For, ere your hallow'd lips had given permission,
I flew with eager haste to bear my father

News of his son's return. Inflam'd with that,
 Think, how a sister's zealous breast must glow!
 Your looks give mild assent. I glow'd indeed
 With the dear tale, and sped me in his ear
 To pour the precious tidings: But my tongue
 Scarce nam'd Arviragus, ere the false stranger
 (As I bethink me since) with stealthy pace
 Fle'd to the cavern's mouth.

C H O R U S.

The king pursu'd?

E V E L I N A.

Alas! he mark'd him not, for 'twas the moment,
 When he had all to ask and all to fear,
 Touching my brother's valour. Hitherto
 His safety only, which but little mov'd him,
 Had reach'd his ears: But when my tongue unfolded
 The story of his bravery and his peril,
 Oh how the tears cours'd plenteous down his cheeks!
 How did he lift unto the heavens his hands.
 In speechless transport! Yet he soon bethought him
 Of Rome's invasion, and with fiery glance
 Survey'd the cavern round; then snatch'd his spear,
 And menac'd to pursue the flying traitor:
 But I with prayers (Oh pardon, if they err'd)
 Withheld his step, for to the left the youth
 Had wing'd his way, where the thick underwood
 Afforded sure retreat. Besides, if found,
 Was age a match for youth?

C H O R U S.

Maiden, enough,

Better perchance for us, if he was captive :
 But in the justice of their cause, and heaven,
 Do Mona's sons confide.

BARD, CHORUS, ELIDURUS, EVELINA.

B A R D.

Druid, the rites
 Are finish'd, all save that which crowns the rest,
 And which pertains to thy blest hand alone :
 For that he kneels before thee.

C H O R U S.

Take him hence,
 We may not trust him forth to fight our cause.

E L I D U R U S.

Now by Andraсте's throne—

C H O R U S.

Nay, swear not, youth,
 The tie is broke, that held thy fealty:
 Thy brother's fled.

E L I D U R U S.

Fled!

C H O R U S.

To the Romans fled,
 Yes, thou hast cause to tremble.

E L I D U R U S.

Ah, Vellinus!

Does thus our love, does thus our friendship end!
 Was I thy brother, youth, and hast thou left me!
 Yes; and how left me, cruel as thou art,

The victim of thy crimes!

C H O R U S.

True, thou must die.

E L I D U R U S.

I pray ye then on your best mercy, fathers,
It may be speedy. I would fain be dead,
If this be life. Yet I must doubt even that,
For falshood of this strange stupendous sort.
Sets firm-ey'd reason on a gaze, mistrusting,
That what she sees in palpable, plain form,
The stars in yon blue arch, these woods, these caverns,
Are all mere tricks of cozenage, nothing real,
The vision of a vision. If he's fled,
I ought to hate this brother.

C H O R U S.

Yet thou dost not.

E L I D U R U S.

But when astonishment will give me leave,
Perchance I shall.—And yet he is my brother,
And he was virtuous once. Yes, ye vile Romans,
Yes, I must die, before my thirsty sword
Drinks one rich drop of vengeance. Yet, ye robbers,
Yet I will curse you with my dying lips:
'Twas you, that stole away my brother's virtue.

C H O R U S.

Now then prepare to die.

E L I D U R U S.

I am prepar'd.

Yet, since I cannot now (what most I wish'd)
By manly prowess guard this lovely maid:

Permit, that on your holiest earth I kneel,
 And pour one fervent prayer for her protection.
 Allow me this, for tho' you think me false,
 The Gods will hear me.

E V E L I N A.

I can hold no longer!

Oh Druid, Druid, at thy feet I fall:
 Yes, I must plead (away with virgin-blushes)
 For such a youth must plead. I'll die to save him,
 Oh take my life, and let him fight for Mona.

C H O R U S.

Virgin, arise. His virtue hath redeem'd him,
 And he shall fight for thee and for his country.
 Youth, thank us with thy deeds. The time is short,
 And now with reverence take our high lustration:
 Thrice do we sprinkle thee with day-break dew
 Shook from the May-thorn blossom; twice and thrice
 Touch we thy forehead with our holy wand:
 Now thou art fully purg'd. Now rise restor'd
 To virtue and to us. Hence then, my son,
 Hie thee to yonder altar, where our Bards
 Shall arm thee duly both with helm and sword
 For warlike enterprize. [Exit Elidurus.

C A R A C T A C U S, C H O R U S, A R V I R A G U S,
 E V E L I N A.

C A R A C T A C U S.

'Tis true, my son,
 Bold are their bearings, and I fear me not.

But they have hearts will not belye their looks,
 I like them well. Yet would to righteous heaven
 Those valiant veterans, that on Snowdon guard
 Their scanty pittance of bleak liberty,
 Were here to join them; we would teach these wolves,
 Tho' we permit their rage to prowl our coasts,
 That vengeance waits them ere they rob our altars.
 Hail, Druid, hail! we find thy valiant guards
 Accounted so, as well bespeaks the wisdom
 That fram'd their phalanx. We but wait thy blessing
 To lead them 'gainst the foe.

C H O R U S.

Caractacus!

Behold this sword: The sword of old Belinus,
 Stain'd with the blood of giants, and its name
 Trifingus. Many an age its charmed blade
 Has slept within yon consecrated trunk.
 Lo, I unsheath it, King; I wave it o'er thee;
 Mark, what portentous streams of scarlet light
 Flow from the brandish'd falchion. On thy knee
 Receive the sacred pledge.—And mark our words,
 By the bright circle of the golden sun,
 By the brief courses of the errant moon,
 By the dread potency of every star
 That studds the mystic zodiac's burning girth,
 By each, and all of these supernal signs,
 We do adjure thee with this trusty blade,
 To guard yon central oak, whose holiest stem
 Involves the spirit of high Taranis:
 This be thy charge; to which in aid we join

Ourselves, and our sage brethren. With our vassals
Thy son and the Brigantian prince shall make
Incurſion on the foe.

C A R A C T A C U S.

In this, and all,

Be ours obſervance meet. Yet ſurely, Druid,
The freſh and active vigour of theſe youths
Might better ſute with this important charge.
Not that my heart ſhrinks at the glorious taſk,
But will with ready zeal pour forth its blood
Upon the ſacred roots, my firmeſt courage
Might fail to ſave. Yet, Fathers, I am old;
And if I fell the foremoſt in the onſet,
Should leave a ſon behind, might ſtill defend you.

C H O R U S.

The ſacred adjuration we have utter'd
May never be recall'd.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Then be it ſo.

But do not think, I counſel this thro' fear:
Old as I am, I truſt with half our powers
I could drive back theſe Romans to their ſhips;
Daſtards, that come as doth the cowering fowler
To tangle me with ſnares, and take me tamely;
Slaves, they ſhall find, that ere they gain their prey,
They have to hunt it boldly with barb'd ſpears,
And meet ſuch conflict, as the chafed boar
Gives to his ſtout aſſailants. Oh ye Gods!
That I might inſtant face them.

Be thy son's

The onset.

A R V I R A G U S.

From his soul that son doth thank ye,
 Blessing the wisdom, that preserves his father
 Thus to the last. Oh if the favouring Gods
 Direct this arm, if their high will permit
 I pour a prosperous vengeance on the foe,
 I ask for life no longer, than to crown
 The valiant task. Steel then, ye powers of heaven,
 Steel my firm soul with your own fortitude,
 Free from alloy of passion. Give me courage,
 That knows not rage; revenge, that knows not malice;

Let me not thirst for carnage, but for conquest:
 And conquest gain'd, sleep vengeance in my breast,
 Ere in its sheath my sword.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Oh hear his father!

If ever rashness spurr'd me on, great Gods,
 To acts of danger thirsting for renown;
 If e'er my eager soul pursu'd its course
 Beyond just reason's limit, visit not
 My faults on him. I am the thing you made me,
 Vindictive, bold, precipitate, and fierce:
 But as you gave to him a milder mind,
 Oh bless him, bless him with a milder fate!

E V E L I N A.

Nor yet unheard let Evelina pour

Her prayers and tears. Oh hear a hapless maid,
That even thro' half the years her life has number'd,
Even nine long years has dragg'd a trembling being,
Beset with pains and perils. Give her peace;
And, to endear it more, be that blest peace
Won by her brother's sword. Oh bless his arm,
And bless his valiant followers, One, and all.

ELIDURUS entering armed.

Hear, Heaven! and let this pure and virgin prayer
Plead even for Elidurus, whose sad soul
Cannot look up to your immortal thrones,
And urge his own request: Else would he ask,
That all the dangers of the approaching fight
Might fall on him alone: That every spear
The Romans wield might at his breast be aim'd;
Each arrow darted on his rattling helm;
That so the brother of this beauteous maid,
Returning safe with victory and peace,
Might bear them to her bosom.

C H O R U S.

Now rise all;

And Heaven, that knows what most ye ought to ask,
Grant all ye ought to have. Behold, the stars
Are faded; universal darkness reigns.
Now is the dreadful hour, now will our torches
Glare with more livid horror, now our shrieks
And clanking arms will more appall the foe.
But heed, ye Bards, that for the sign of onset
Ye found the ancientest of all your rhymes,
Whose birth tradition notes not, nor who fram'd

Its lofty strains: The force of that high air.
 Did Julius feel, when, fir'd by it, our fathers
 First drove him recreant to his ships; and ill
 Had far'd his second landing, but that fate
 Silenc'd the master Bard, who led the song.
 Now forth, brave Pair! Go, with our blessing go;
 Mute be the march, as ye ascend the hill:
 Then, when ye hear the sound of our shrill trumpet
 Fall on the foe.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Now glory be thy guide;
 Pride of my soul, go forth and conquer.

E V E L I N A.

Brother,

Yet one embrace. Oh thou much-honour'd Stranger
 I charge thee fight by my dear brother's side,
 And shield him from the foe; for he is brave,
 And will with bold and well-directed arm
 Return thy succour.

[Exeunt Arviragus and Elidurus]

C H O R U S.

Now, ye Priests, with speed
 Strew on the altar's height your sacred leaves,
 And light the morning flame. But why is this?
 Why doth our brother Mador snatch his harp
 From yonder bough? Why this way bend his step!

C A R A C T A C U S.

He is entranc'd. The fillet bursts, that bound
 His liberal locks; his snowy vestments fall
 In ampler folds; and all his floating form

Both seem to glisten with divinity!
 'Tis he speechless. Say, thou Chief of Bards,
 What is there in this airy vacancy,
 That thou with fiery and irregular glance
 Shouldst scan thus wildly? wherefore heaves thy breast?
 Why starts—

C H O R U S.

O D E.

I. 1.

Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread,
 That shook the earth with thundering tread?
 'Twas Death.—In haste
 The Warrior past;
 High tower'd his helmed head:
 I mark'd his mail, I mark'd his shield,
 I spy'd the sparkling of his spear,
 I saw his giant arm the falchion wield;
 Wide wav'd the bickering blade, and fir'd the angry air.

I. 2.

On me (he cry'd) my Britons, wait,
 To lead you to the field of fate
 I come: Yon car,
 That cleaves the air,
 Descends to throne my state:
 I mount your Champion and your God.
 My proud steeds neigh beneath the thong:
 Hark! to my wheels of brass, that rattle loud!
 Hark! to my clarion shrill, that brays the woods among!

• Here one of the Druids blows the sacred trumpet.

I. 3.

Fear not now the fever's fire,

Fear not now the death-bed groan,

Pangs that torture, pains that tire,

Bed-rid age with feeble moan :

These domestic terrors wait

Hourly at my palace gate;

And when o'er slothful realms my rod I wave,

These on the tyrant king and coward slave

Rush with vindictive rage, and drag them to their grave.

II. 1.

But ye, my Sons, at this high hour

Shall share the fulness of my power :

From all your bows,

In levell'd rows,

My own dread shafts shall shower.

Go then to conquest, gladly go,

Deal forth my dole of destiny,

With all my fury dash the trembling foe

Down to those darksome dens, where Rome's pale

II. 2.

[spectres lie.

Where creeps the ninefold stream profound

Her black inexorable round,

And on the bank,

To willows dank,

The shivering ghosts are bound.

Twelve thousand crescents all shall swell

To full-orb'd pride, and fading die,

Ere they again in life's gay mansions dwell :

Not such the meed that crowns the sons of Liberty.

II. 3.

No, my Britons! battle-slain,
 Rapture gilds your parting hour :
 I, that all despotic reign,
 Claim but there a moment's power.
 Swiftly the soul of British flame
 Animates some kindred frame,
 Swiftly to life and light triumphant flies,
 Exults again in martial extacies,
 Again for freedom fights, again for freedom dies.

C A R A C T A C U S.

It does, it does! unconquer'd, undismay'd,
 The British soul revives—Champion, lead on,
 I follow—give me way. Some blessed shaft
 Will rid me of this clog of cumbrous age ;
 And I again shall in some happier mould
 Rise to redeem my country.

C H O R U S.

Stay thee, Prince,
 And mark what clear and amber-skirted clouds
 Rise from the altar's verge, and cleave the skies :
 Oh 'tis a prosperous omen ! Soon expect
 To hear glad tidings.

C A R A C T A C U S.

I will send them to thee.

C H O R U S.

But see, a Bard approaches, and he bears them :
 Else is his eye no herald to his heart.

BARD, CHORUS, CARACTACUS.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Speedily tell thy tale.

B A R D.

A tale like mine,

I trust your ears will willingly pursue

Thro' each glad circumstance. First, Monarch, learn,
The Roman troop is fled.

C H O R U S.

Great Gods, we thank ye!

C A R A C T A C U S.

Fought they not ere they fled? Oh tell me all.

B A R D.

Silent, as night, that wrapt us in her veil,
We pac'd up yonder hill, whose woody ridge
O'erhung the ambush'd foe. No sound was heard,
Step felt, or sight descry'd: for safely hid,
Beneath the purple pall of sacrifice
Did sleep our holy fire, nor saw the air,
'Till to that pass we came, where whilom Brute
Planted his five hoar altars. To our rites,
Then swift we hasted, and in one short moment
The rocky piles were cloth'd with livid flame.
Near each a white-rob'd Druid, whose stern voice
'Thunder'd deep execrations on the foe.
Now wak'd our horrid symphony, now all
Our harps terrific rang: Meanwhile the grove
Trembled, the altars shook, and thro' our ranks

Our sacred sisters rush'd in fable robes,
 With hair dishevell'd, and funeral brands
 Hurl'd round with menacing fury. On they rush'd
 In fierce and frantic mood, as is their wont
 Amid the magic rites, they do to Night
 In their deep dens below. Motions like these
 Were never dar'd before in open air!

C H O R U S.

Did I not say, we had a power within us,
 That might appal even Romans?

B A R D.

And it did.

They stood aghast, and to our vollied darts,
 That thick as hail fell on their helms and corslets,
 Scarce rais'd a warding shield. The sacred trumpet
 Then rent the air, and instant at the signal
 Rush'd down Arviragus with all our vassals;
 A hot, but short-liv'd, conflict then ensu'd:
 For soon they fled. I saw the Romans fly,
 Before I left the field.

C A R A C T A C U S.

My son pursu'd?

B A R D.

The Prince and Elidurus, like twin lions,
 Did side by side engage. Death seem'd to guide
 Their swords, no stroke fell fruitless, every wound
 Gave him a victim.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Thus my friend Ebrancus!

Ill-fated prince! didst thou and I in youth

Unite our valours. In his prime he fell,
On Conway's banks I saw him fall, and slew
His murderer. But how far did they pursue?

B A R D.

Even to the ships: For I descry'd the rout,
Far as the twilight gleam would aid my sight.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Now, thanks to the bright star that rul'd his birth;
Yes, he will soon return to claim my blessing,
And he shall have it pour'd in tears of joy
On his bold breast! methought I heard a step:
Is it not his?

B A R D.

'Tis some of our own train,
And as I think, they lead six Romans captive.

CHORUS, CARACTACUS, CAPTIVES.

C H O R U S.

My brethren, bear the prisoners to the cavern,
'Till we demand them.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Pause ye yet a while.

They seem of bold demeanor, and have helms,
That speak them leaders. Hear me, Romans, hear.
That you are captives, is the chance of war:
Yet captives as ye are, in Britain's eye
Ye are not slaves. Barbarians, tho' ye call us,
We know the native rights, man claims from man,
And therefore never shall we gall your necks

With chains, or drag you at our scythed cars
 In arrogance of triumph. Nor 'till taught
 By Rome (what Britain sure should scorn to learn)
 Her avarice, will we barter you for gold.
 True, ye are captives, and our country's safety
 Forbids, we give you back to liberty :
 We give you therefore to the immortal Gods,
 To them we lift you in the radiant cloud
 Of sacrifice. They may in limbs of freedom
 Replace your free-born souls, and their high mercy
 Haply shall to some better world advance you;
 Or else in this restore that golden gift,
 Which lost, leaves life a burden. Does there breathe
 A wretch so pall'd with the vain fear of death
 Can call this cruelty ? 'tis love, 'tis mercy ;
 And grant, ye Gods, if e'er I'm made a captive,
 I meet the like fair treatment from the foe,
 Whose stronger star quells mine. Now lead them on,
 And, while they live, treat them, as men should men,
 And not as Rome treats Britain. [Exeunt Captives.
 Druid, these,
 Even should their chief escape, may to the Gods
 In sacrifice—Whence was that shriek ?

EVELINA, CARACTACUS, CHORUS.

EVELINA.

My father,
 Support me, take me trembling to your arms;
 All is not well. Ah me, my fears o'ercome me!

C A R A C T A C U S.

C A R A C T A C U S.

What means my child?

E V E L I N A.

Alas! we are betray'd.

Even now as wandering in yon eastern grove
 I call'd the Gods to aid us, the dread sound
 Of many hasty steps did meet mine ear :
 This way they prest.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Daughter, thy fears are vain.

E V E L I N A.

Methought I saw the flame of lighted brands,
 And what did glitter to my dazzled sight,
 Like swords and helms.

C A R A C T A C U S.

All, all the feeble coinage

Of maiden fear.

E V E L I N A.

Nay, if mine ear mistook not,
 I heard the traitor's voice, who that way 'scap'd,
 Calling to arms.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Away with idle terrors!

Know, thy brave brother's helm is crown'd with
 conquest,

Our Foes are fled, their leaders are our captives.
 Smile, my lov'd child, and imitate the sun,
 That rises ruddy from behind yon oaks
 To hail him victor.

C H O R U S.

That the rising sun!

Oh horror! horror! sacrilegious fires
Devour our groves: They blaze, they blaze! Oh sound
The trump again; recall the prince, or all
Is lost.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Druid, where is thy fortitude?

Do not I live? Is not this holy sword
Firm in my grasp? I will preserve your groves.
Britons, I go: Let those that dare die nobly,
Follow my step. [Exit Caractacus.

E V E L I N A.

Oh whither does he go?

Return, return: Ye holy men, recall him.
What is his arm against a host of Romans?
Oh I have lost a father!

C H O R U S.

Ruthless Gods!

Ye take away our souls: A general panic
Reigns thro' the grove. Oh fly, my brethren, fly,
To aid the king, fly to preserve your altars!
Alas! 'tis all in vain; our fate is fixt.
Look there. look there, thou miserable maid!
Behold thy bleeding brother.

ARVIRAGUS, ELIDURUS, EVELINA,
CHORUS.

A R V I R A G U S.

Thanks, good youth!

Safe hast thou brought me to that holy spot,
Where I did wish to die. Support me still.
Oh, I am sick to death. Yet one step more :
Now lay me gently down. I would drag out
This life, tho' at some cost of throbs and pangs,
Just long enough to claim my father's blessing,
And sigh my last breath in my sister's arms.—
And here she kneels, poor maid! all dumb with grief.
Restrain thy sorrow, gentlest Evelina,
True, thou dost see me bleed: I bleed to death.

E V E L I N A.

Say'st thou to death? Oh Gods! the barbed shaft
Is buried in his breast. Yes, he must die;
And I, alas! am doom'd to see him die.
Where are your healing arts, medicinal herbs,
Ye holy men, your wonder-working spells?
Pluck me but out this shaft, stanch but this blood,
And I will call down blessings on your heads.
With such a fervency—And can ye not!
Then let me beg you on my bended knee,
Give to my misery some opiate drug,
May shut up all my senses.—Yes, good fathers,
Mingle the potion so, that it may kill me
Just at the instant, this poor languisher

Heaves his last sigh.

A R V I R A G U S.

Talk not thus wildly, sister,

Think on our father's age—

E V E L I N A.

Alas! my brother!

We have no father now; or if we have,

He is a captive.

A R V I R A G U S.

Captive! Oh my wound!

It stings me now—But is it so?

[Turning to the Chorus.

C H O R U S.

Alas!

We know no more, save that he sallied single

To meet the foe, whose unexpected host

Round by the east had wound their fraudulent march,

And fir'd our groves.

E L I D U R U S.

Oh fatal, fatal valour!

Then is he seiz'd, or slain.

A R V I R A G U S.

Too sure he is!

Druid, not half the Romans met our swords;

We found the fraud too late: the rest are yonder.

C H O R U S.

How could they gain the pass?

A R V I R A G U S.

The wretch, that fled

That way, return'd, conducting half their powers;

And—But thy pardon, youth, I will not wound thee,
He is thy brother.

E L I D U R U S.

Thus my honest sword
Shall force the blood from the detested heart,
That holds alliance with him.

A R V I R A G U S.

Elidurus,
Hold, on our friendship, hold. Thou noble youth,
Look on this innocent maid. She must to Rome,
Captive to Rome. Thou seest warm life flow from me,
Ere long she'll have no brother. Heaven's my witness,
I do not wish, that thou should'st live the slave
Of Rome: But yet she is my sister.

E L I D U R U S.

Prince,
Thou urgest that, might make me drag an age
In fetters worse than Roman. I will live,
And while I live—

Enter B A R D.

Fly to your caverns, Druids,
The grove's beset around. The chief approaches.

C H O R U S.

Let him approach, we will confront his pride;
The Seer that rules amid the groves of Mona
Has not to fear his fury. What though age
Slackens our sinews; what tho' shield and sword
Give not their iron aid to guard our body;
Yet virtue arms our soul, and 'gainst that panoply

What 'vails the rage of robbers? Let him come.

A R V I R A G U S.

I faint apace.—Ye venerable men,
If ye can save this body from pollution,
If ye can tomb me in this sacred place,
I trust ye will. I fought to save these groves,
And, fruitless though I fought, some grateful oak,
I trust will spread its reverential gloom
O'er my pale ashes—Ah! that pang was death!
My sister, Oh!— [Dies.

E L I D U R U S.

She faints! Ah raise her!—

E V E L I N A.

Yes,

Now he is dead. I felt his spirit go
In a cold sigh, and as it past, methought
It paus'd a while, and trembled on my lips!
'Take me not from him: Breathless as he is,
He is my brother still, and if the Gods
Do please to grace him with some happier being,
'They ne'er can give to him a fonder sister.

C H O R U S.

Brethren, surround the corse, and, ere the foe
Approaches, chant with meet solemnity
That grateful dirge your dying champion claims.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Lo, where incumbent o'er the shade
Rome's ravening eagle bows her beaked head!
Yet while a moment fate affords,
While yet a moment freedom stays,

That moment, which outweighs
 Eternity's unmeasur'd hoards,
 Shall Mona's grateful Bards employ
 To hymn their godlike Hero to the sky.

S E M I C H O R U S.

Ring out, ye mortal strings;
 Answer thou heavenly harp, instinct with spirit all,
 That o'er the jasper arch self-warbling swings
 Of blest Andraсте's throne:
 Thy sacred sounds alone
 Can celebrate the fall
 Of bold Arviragus—[Enter Aulus Didius and Romans.

AULUS DIDIUS, CHORUS, EVELINA,
 ELIDURUS.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Ye bloody priests,
 Behold we burst on your infernal rites,
 And bid you pause. Instant restore our soldiers,
 Nor hope that superstition's ruthless step
 Shall wade in Roman gore. Ye savage men,
 Did not our laws give license to all faiths,
 We would o'erturn your altars, headlong heave
 These shapeless symbols of your barbarous Gods,
 And let the golden sun into your caves.

C H O R U S.

Servant of Caesar, has thine impious tongue
 Spent the black venom of its blasphemy?
 It has. Then take our curses on thine head,

Even his fell curses, who doth reign in Mona,
Vicegerent of those Gods thy pride insults.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Bold priest, I scorn thy curses, and thyself.
Soldiers, go search the caves, and free the prisoners.
Take heed, ye seize Caractacus alive.
Arrest yon youth; load him with heaviest irons,
He shall to Caesar answer for his crime.

E L I D U R U S.

I stand prepar'd to triumph in my crime.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

'Tis well, prond boy—Look to the beauteous maid;
[To the soldiers.
That tranc'd in grief, bends o'er yon bleeding corse,
Respect her sorrows.

E V E L I N A.

Hence ye barbarous men,
Ye shall not take him weltering thus in blood,
'To shew at Rome what British virtue was.
Avaunt! the breathless body that ye touch
Was once Arviragus!

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Fear us not, Princess!

We reverence the dead.

C H O R U S.

Would too to heaven,
Ye reverenc'd the Gods but even enough
Not to debase with slavery's cruel chain,
What they created free.

C A R A C T A C U S.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

The Romans fight

Not to enslave, but humanize the world.

C H O R U S.

Go to, we will not parley with thee, Roman:

Instant pronounce our doom.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Hear it, and thank us.

This once our clemency shall spare your groves,

If at our call ye yield the British king:

Yet learn, when next ye aid the foes of Caesar,

That each old oak, whose solemn gloom ye boast,

Shall bow beneath our axes.

C H O R U S.

Be they blasted,

Whene'er their shade forgets to shelter virtue.

Enter B A R D.

Mourn, Mona, mourn. Caractacus is captive!

And dost thou smile, false Roman? do not think

He fell an easy prey. Know, ere he yielded,

Thy bravest veterans bled. He too, thy spy,

The base Brigantian prince, hath seal'd his fraud

With death. Bursting thro' armed ranks, that hemm'd

The caitiff round, the brave Caractacus

Seiz'd his false throat; and as he gave him death

Indignant thunder'd, "Thus is my last stroke

"The stroke of justice." Numbers then oppress him:

I saw the slave, that cowardly behind

Pinion'd his arms; I saw the sacred sword

Writh'd from his grasp : I saw, what now ye see,
Inglorious sight ! those barbarous bonds upon him.

C A R A C T A C U S, A U L U S D I D I U S,
C H O R U S, &c.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Romans, methinks the malice of your tyrant
Might furnish heavier chains. Old as I am,
And wither'd as you see these war-worn limbs,
Trust me, they shall support the weightiest load
Injustice dares impose.—

Proud-crested soldier ! [To Didius.

Who seem'st the master-mover in this business,
Say, dost thou read less terror on my brow,
Than when thou met'st me in the fields of war
Heading my nations ? No, my free-born soul
Has scorn still left to sparkle thro' these eyes,
And frown defiance on thee.—Is it thus !

[Seeing his son's body.

Then I'm indeed a captive. Mighty Gods !
My soul, my soul submits : Patient it bears
The ponderous load of grief ye heap upon it.
Yes, it will grovel in this shatter'd breast,
And be the sad tame thing, it ought to be
Coopt in a servile body.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Droop not, King.

When Claudius, the great master of the world,

Shall hear the noble story of thy valour,
His pity—

C A R A C T A C U S.

Can a Roman pity, foldier?
And if he can, Gods! must a Briton bear it?
Arviragus, my bold, my breathless boy,
'Thou hast escap'd such pity; thou art free.
Here in high Mona shall thy noble limbs
Rest in a noble grave; posterity
Shall to thy tomb with annual reverence bring
Sepulchral stones, and pile them to the clouds:
Whilst mine—

A U L U S D I D I U S.

The morn doth hasten our departure.
Prepare thee, King, to go: A favouring gale
Now swells our sails.

C A R A C T A C U S.

Inhuman, that thou art!
Dost thou deny a moment for a father
To shed a few warm tears o'er his dead son?
I tell thee, chief, this act might claim a life,
To do it duly; even a longer life,
'Than sorrow ever suffer'd. Cruel man!
And thou deniest me moments. Be it so.
I know you Romans weep not for your children;
Ye triumph o'er your tears, and think it valour:
I triumph in my tears. Yes, best-lov'd boy,
Yes, I can weep, can fall upon thy corse,
And I can tear my hairs, these few gray hairs,
The only honours war and age have left me.

Ah son! thou might'st have rul'd o'er many nations,
As did thy royal ancestry : But I,
Rash that I was, ne'er knew the golden curb
Discretion hangs on bravery : Else perchance
These men, that fasten fetters on thy father,
Had su'd to him for peace, and claim'd his friendship.

A U L U S D I D I U S.

But thou wast still implacable to Rome,
And scorn'd her friendship.

C A R A C T A C U S starting up from the body.

Soldier, I had arms,
Had neighing steeds to whirl my iron cars,
Had wealth, dominion. Dost thou wonder, Roman,
I fought to save them? What if Caesar aims
To lord it universal o'er the world,
Shall the world tamely crouch at Caesar's footstool?

A U L U S D I D I U S.

Read in thy fate our answer. Yet if sooner
Thy pride had yielded—

C A R A C T A C U S.

Thank thy Gods, I did not.
Had it been so, the glory of thy master,
Like my misfortunes, had been short and trivial,
Oblivion's ready prey : Now after struggling
Nine years, and that right bravely 'gainst a tyrant,
I am his slave to treat as seems him good;
If cruelly, 'twill be an easy task
To bow a wretch, alas! how bow'd already!
Down to the dust: If well, his clemency,
When trick'd and varnish'd by your glossing penmen,

Will shine in honour's annals, and adorn
Himself; it boots not me. Look there, look there,
The slave that shot that dart, kill'd every hope
Of lost Caractacus! Arise, my daughter.
Alas! poor Prince; art thou too in vile fetters?

[To Elidurus,

Come hither, youth: Be thou to me a son,
To her a brother. Thus with trembling arms
I lead you forth; children, we go to Rome.
Weep'st thou, my girl? I prithee hoard thy tears
For the sad meeting of thy captive mother:
For we have much to tell her, much to say
Of these good men, who nurtur'd us in Mona;
Much of the fraud and malice that pursu'd us;
Much of her son, who pour'd his precious blood
To save his sire and sister; Think'st thou, maid,
Her gentleness can hear the tale, and live?
And yet she must. Oh Gods, I grow a talker!
Grief and old age are ever full of words:
But I'll be mute. Adieu! ye holy men;
Yet one look more—Now lead us hence for ever.

LETTERS.



L E T T E R I.

I WAS aware, when I sent you my Poem *, that it would be liable to the very objections you make to it. Yet perhaps they will be obviated to your satisfaction, when I have laid before you (as indeed I ought to have done at first) the original idea which led me to chuse such a subject, and to execute it in so peculiar a manner.

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Had I intended to give an exact copy of the ancient Drama, your objections to the present Poem would be unanswerable. But my design was much less confined. I meant only to pursue the ancient method, so far as it is probable a Greek Poet, were he alive, would now do, in order to adapt himself to the genius of our times, and the character of our Tragedy. According to this notion, every thing was to be allowed to the present taste, which nature and Aristotle could possibly dispense with; and nothing of intrigue or refinement was to be admitted, at which ancient judgment could reasonably take offence. Good sense, as well as antiquity, prescribed an adherence to the three great Unities; these therefore were strictly observed. But on the other hand, to follow the mo-

* Elfrida, to which these letters were prefixt in the former Editions of that Poem.

dern masters in those respects wherein they had not so faultily deviated from their predecessors, a story was chosen, in which the tender rather than the noble passions were predominant, and in which even love had the principal share. Characters too were drawn as nearly approaching to private ones, as Tragic dignity would permit; and affections raised rather from the impulse of common humanity, than the distresses of royalty and the fate of kingdoms. Besides this, for the sake of natural embellishment, and to reconcile mere modern readers to that simplicity of fable, in which I thought it necessary to copy the Ancients, I contrived to lay the scene in an old romantic forest. For, by this means, I was enabled to enliven the Poem by various touches of pastoral description; not affectedly brought in from the store-house of a picturesque imagination, but necessarily resulting from the scenery of the place itself: A beauty so extremely striking in the *Comus* of Milton, and the *As You Like It* of Shakespear; and of which the Greek Muse (though fond of rural Imagery) has afforded few examples, besides that admirable one in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles.

By this idea I could wish you to regulate your criticism. I need not, I think, observe to you that these deviations from the practice of the Ancients may be reasonably defended. For we were long since agreed, that where Love does not degenerate into epifodical gallantry, but makes the foundation of the distress,

It is, from the universality of its influence, a passion very proper for Tragedy. And I have seen you too much moved at the representation of some of our best Tragedies of private story, to believe you will condemn me for making the other deviation.

VOL. II.

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L E T T E R II.

I AM glad, you approve the method, I have taken of softening the rigour of the old Drama. If I have, indeed, softened it sufficiently for the modern taste, without parting with any of the essentials of the Greek method, I have obtained my purpose: which was to obviate some of the popular objections made to the ancient form of Tragedy. For the current Opinion, you know, is, that by the strict adherence to the Unities, it restrains the genius of the Poet; by the simplicity of its conduct, it diminishes the pathos of the fable; and, by the admission of a continued chorus, prevents that agreeable embarrass, which awakens our attention, and interests our passions.

The universal veneration, which we pay to the name of Shakespear, at the same time that it has improved our relish for the higher beauties of Poetry, has undoubtedly been the ground-work of all this false criticism. That disregard, which, in compliance merely with the taste of the times, he shewed of all the necessary rules of the Drama, hath since been considered as a characteristic of his vast and original genius; and consequently set up as a model for succeeding writers. Hence M. Voltaire remarks very justly,
 “ Que le merite de cet auteur a perdu le Theatre Anglois. Le tems, qui seul fait la reputation des hommes, rend à la fin leurs defauts respectables.”

Yet, notwithstanding the absurdity of this low superstition, the notion is so popular amongst Englishmen, that I fear it will never be entirely discredited, till a poet rises up amongst us with a genius as elevated and daring as Shakespear's, and a judgment as sober and chastised as Racine's. But as it seems too long to wait for this prodigy, it will not surely be improper for any one of common talents, who would entertain the public without indulging its caprice, to take the best models of antiquity for his guides; and to adapt those models, as near as may be, to the manners and taste of his own times. Unless he do both, he will, in effect, do nothing. For it cannot be doubted, that the many gross faults of our stage are owing to the complaisance and servility, with which the ordinary run of writers have ever humoured that illiterate, whimsical, or corrupted age, in which it was their misfortune to be born.

Milton, you will tell me, is a noble exception to this observation. He is so, and would have been a nobler, had he not run into the contrary extreme. The contempt in which, perhaps with justice, he held the age he lived in, prevented him from condescending either to amuse or instruct it. He had, before, given to his unworthy Countrymen the noblest Poem that genius, conducted by ancient art, could produce; and he had seen them receive it with disregard, if not with dislike. Conscious therefore of his own dignity, and of their demerit, he looked to posterity only for

his reward, and to posterity only directed his future labours. Hence it was, perhaps, that he formed his *Samson Agonistes* on a model more simple and severe than Athens herself would have demanded; and took *Æschylus* for his master rather than *Sophocles* or *Euripides*: intending by this conduct to put as great a distance as possible between himself and his contemporary writers; and to make his work (as he himself said) “much different from what amongst them “passed for the best.” The success of the Poem was, accordingly, what one would have expected. The age, it appeared in, treated it with total neglect; neither hath that posterity, to which he appealed, and which has done justice to most of his other writings, as yet given to this excellent piece its full measure of popular and universal fame. Perhaps, in your closet, and that of a few more, who unaffectedly admire genuine nature and ancient simplicity, the *Agonistes* may hold a distinguished rank. Yet, surely, we cannot say (in *Hamlet*’s phrase) “that it pleases “the Million; it is still Caviar to the general:

Hence, I think, I may conclude, that unless one would be content with a very late and very learned posterity, *Milton*’s conduct in this point should not be followed. A Writer of Tragedy must certainly adapt himself more to the general taste; because the Dramatic, of all kinds of Poetry, ought to be most universally relished and understood. The Lyric Muse addresses herself to the imagination of a reader; the

Didactic to his judgment; but the Tragic strikes directly on his passions. Few men have a strength of imagination capable of pursuing the flights of Pindar; many have not a clearness of apprehension suited to the reasonings of Lucretius and Pope: But every man has passions to be excited; and every man feels them excited by Shakespear.

But, though Tragedy be thus chiefly directed to the heart, it must be observed, that it will seldom attain its end without the concurrent approbation of the judgment. And to procure this, the artificial construction of the fable goes a great way. In France, the excellence of their several poets is chiefly measured by this standard. And amongst our own writers, if you except Shakespear (who indeed ought, for his other virtues, to be exempt from common rules) you will find, that the most regular of their compositions is generally reckoned their *Chef d'oeuvre*, witness the *All for Love* of Dryden, the *Venice Preserved* of Otway, and the *Jane Shore* of Rowe.

L E T T E R III.

THE scheme, you proposed in your last, is I own practicable enough. Undoubtedly, most part of the Dialogue of the Chorus might be put into the mouth of an Emma or Matilda, who, with some little shew of sisterly concernment, might be easily made to claim kindred with Earl Athelwold. Nay, by the addition of a few unnecessary incidents, which would cost me no more than they are worth in contriving, and an unmeaning personage or two, who would be as little expence in creating, I believe I could quickly make the whole tolerably fit for an English Audience.

But for all this I cannot persuade myself to enter upon the task. I have, I know not how (like many of my betters) contracted a kind of veneration for the old Chorus; and am willing to think it essential to the Tragic Drama. You shall hear the reasons that incline me to this judgment. They respect the Poet and the Audience.

It is agreed, I think, on all hands, that in the conduct of a fable, the admission of a Chorus lays a necessary restraint on the Poet. The two Unities of time and place, are esteemed by some of less consequence in our modern Tragedy, than the third Unity of Action; but admit a Chorus, and you must, of

necessity, restore them to those equal rights, which they anciently enjoyed, and yet claim, by the Charter of Aristotle. For the difference, which the use of the Chorus makes, is this: The modern Drama contents itself with a fact *represented*; the ancient requires it to be *represented before Spectators*. Now as it cannot be supposed, that these Spectators should accompany the chief personages into private apartments, one single Scene, or *unity of Place*, becomes strictly necessary. And as these Spectators are assembled on purpose to observe and bear a part in the action, the *time* of that action becomes, of course, that of the spectacle or representation itself; it being unreasonable to make the Spectators attend so long, as the Poet, in bringing about his Catastrophe, may require. And this is usually the practice of the ancient Stage. The modern, on the contrary, regards very little these two capital restraints; and its disuse of the Chorus helps greatly to conceal the absurdity. For the Poet, without offending so much against the laws of probability, may lead his personages from one part to another of the same palace or city, when they have only a paltry Servant or insignificant Confidant to attend them. He may think himself at liberty to spend two or three days, months, or even years; in completing his story; to clear the stage at the end, or, if he pleases, in the middle of every act: and, being under no controul of the Chorus, he can break the continuity of the Drama, just where he thinks it convenient; and, by the assistance of a brisk fugue and a good violin, can

persuade his audience, that as much time has elapsed as his Hero's, or rather his own distress, may demand

Hence it is, that secret intrigues become (as Mr. Dryden gravely calls them) the *beauties of our modern Stage*. Hence it is, that Incidents, and Bustle, and *Business*, supply the place of Simplicity, Nature, and Pathos: A happy change, perhaps, for the generality of writers, who might otherwise find it impossible to fill “ *cette longue carriere de cinq actes,*” which a Writer, sufficiently experienced in these matters, says, “ *est si prodigieusement difficile à remplir sans Episodes.*”

But, whatever these Play-makers may have gained by rejecting the Chorus, the true Poet has lost considerably by it. For he has lost a graceful and natural resource to the embellishments of Picturesque Description, sublime allegory, and whatever else comes under the denomination of *pure Poetry*. Shakespear, indeed, had the power of introducing this naturally, and, what is most strange, of joining it with *pure Passion*. But I make no doubt, if we had a Tragedy of his formed on the Greek model, we should find in it more frequent, if not nobler instances of his high Poetical capacity, than in any single composition he has left us. I think you have a proof of this in those parts of his historical plays, which are called Choruses, and written in the common Dialogue metre. And your imagination will easily conceive, how fine an ode the description of the night preceding the battle of Agin-

court, would have made in his hands; and what additional grace it would receive from that form of composition.

With the means of introducing Poetry naturally is lost, also, the opportunity of conveying moral reflections with grace and propriety. But this comes more properly under consideration, when I give you my thoughts on the advantage the audience received from a well-conducted Chorus.

L E T T E R I V.

IN my last I took no notice of that superior pomp and majesty, which the Chorus necessarily added to the scene of the Drama. I made no remarks on the agreeable variety it introduced into the versification and metre; nor shewed how, by uniting the harmony of the Lyre to the pomp of the Buskin, music became intimately connected with it, and furnished it with all its additional graces. These and many other advantages I might have insisted upon, had I thought them so material as the two I mentioned; the latter of which, namely, its being a proper vehicle for moral and sentiment, is so material, that I think nothing can possibly atone for the loss of it.

In those parts of the Drama, where the judgment of a mixt audience is most liable to be misled by what passes before its view, the chief actors are generally too much agitated by the furious passions, or too much attached by the tender ones, to think coolly, and impress on the spectators a moral sentiment properly. A Confidant or Servant has seldom sense enough to do it, never dignity enough to make it regarded. Instead therefore of these, the Ancients were provided with a band of distinguished persons, not merely capable of seeing and hearing, but of arguing, advising, and reflecting; from the leader of which

moral sentiment never came unnaturally, but suitably and gracefully; and from the troop itself, a poetical flow of tender commiseration, of religious supplication, or of virtuous triumph, was ever ready to heighten the pathos, to inspire a reverential awe of the Deity, and to advance the cause of *honesty* and of truth.

If you ask me, how it augmented the pathetic, I cannot give you a better answer than the Abbé Vatry has done in his dissertation on the subject, published in the *Memoirs de l' Acad. des Inscr. &c.* “ It effected
 “ this (says he) both in its *odes* and *dialogue*. The
 “ wonderful power of Music and the Dance is universally allowed. And, as these were always *accompaniments* to the Odes, there is no doubt but they
 “ contributed greatly to move the passions. It was
 “ necessary that there should be odes or intermedes;
 “ but it was also necessary, that these intermedes
 “ should not suffer the minds of the Audience to
 “ cool, but, on the contrary, should support and fortify those passions which the previous scenes had
 “ already excited. Nothing imaginable could produce
 “ this effect better, than the choral songs and dances, which filled the mind with ideas corresponding
 “ to the subject, and never failed to add new force to the sentiments of the principal personages. In the
 “ Dialogue also, the Chorus served to move the passions, by shewing to the spectators other spectators
 “ strongly affected by the action. A spectacle of such
 “ a kind as is fitted to excite in us the passions of

" *Terror*, and *Pity*, will not of itself so strongly affect
 " us, as when we see others, also, affected by it.
 " The painters have generally understood this secret,
 " and have had recourse to an expedient, similar to
 " that of the Chorus of the poets. Not content with
 " the simple representation of an historical event, they
 " have also added groups of assistant figures, and ex-
 " pressed in their faces the different passions, they would
 " have their picture excite. Nay they sometimes in-
 " list into their service even irrational animals. In
 " the *slaughter of the Innocents*, le Brun was not satis-
 " fied with expressing all the horror, of which the
 " subject is naturally capable, he has also painted two
 " horses with their hair standing on end, and starting
 " back, as afraid to trample upon the bleeding in-
 " fants. This is an artifice which has often been
 " employed, and which has always succeeded. A
 " good poet should do the same; and *Iphigenia* should
 " not be suffered to appear on the Theatre, without
 " being accompanied with persons capable of feeling
 " her misfortunes."

Had this ingenious Abbé seen the famous *Belshaz-
 rius* of Vandyke, I am apt to believe he would have
 thought it a much more noble illustration of the mat-
 ter. The Soldier in that piece, though so much con-
 demned by our modern Professors of *Virtù* for being,
 as they say, the principal Figure, is the very thing
 which raises this picture from a simple Portrait (which
 it must otherwise have been) to the finest moral paint-

ing; and in Greece would have placed the painter amongst that class of Artists, which they esteemed the noblest, the ΗΘΟΓΡΑΦΟΙ. The greatest Tragic Poet could not have raised a more exquisite distress than this judicious painter has done by the attitude of that Soldier; as well as by the subordinate figures, which, with great propriety, are female ones; nothing being so likely to raise in a military mind that mixture of pity and disdain, which he wanted to express, as to see such a hero relieved by charity, and that too the charity of girls and old women.

But, returning to my subject, I will just observe to you, that if it be proper to assist an audience in relishing the pathetic, by shewing an imitation of that pathos in the Chorus, it is much more so to instruct them how to be affected properly, with the characters and actions which are represented in the course of the Drama. The character of Pierre in Venice Preserved, when left entirely to the judgment of the audience, is perhaps one of the most improper for public view, that ever was produced on any stage. It is almost impossible, that some part of the spectators should go from the representation with very false and immoral impressions. But had the Tragedy been written on the ancient plan; had Pierre's character been drawn just as it is, and some few alterations made in Jaffier's, I know no two characters more capable of doing service in a moral view, when justly animad-

verted upon by the Chorus. I don't say, I would have trusted Otway with the writing of it.

To have done, and to release you. Bad characters become on this plan as harmless in the hands of the Poet, as the Historian; and good ones become infinitely more useful, by how much the Poetic is more forcible than the Historical mode of instruction.

L E T T E R V.

THE reason, why in a former Letter you advised me to alter the Chorus, is made very apparent in your last. For, by persuading me to get the Odes set to music, and to risk the Play on the stage, I understand only that you are willing, any how, to make it a more profitable work for me, than it can possibly be by means of the press alone.

Yet certainly, Sir, one single reflection on our British pit will make you change your sentiments effectually. Think only on the trial made by M. Racine, in a nation much before ours, in a taste for probability and decorum in Theatrical diversions. In his two last Tragedies, you know, he has fully succeeded in the very thing I aimed at; and has adapted a noble imitation of ancient simplicity to the taste of his own times: particularly in his *ATHALIA*, a poem in which the most superb and august spectacle, the most interesting event, and the most sublime flow of inspired Poetry, are all nobly and naturally united. Yet I am told, that neither that, nor the *ESTHER*, retains its Chorus, when represented on the French Theatre.

To what is this owing? To the refinement most certainly of our modern music. This art is now car-

ried to such a pitch of perfection, or if you will of corruption, which makes it utterly incapable of being an adjunct to Poetry. “ Il y a grand apparence, que
 “ les progrès que vous avez faits dans la musique, ont
 “ nuï enfin à ceux de la véritable Tragedie. C’est un
 “ talent, qui a fait tort à un autre;” says M. Voltaire with his usual taste and judgment. Our different cadences, our divisions, variations, repetitions, without which modern music cannot subsist, are entirely improper for the expression of poetry, and were scarce known to the Ancients.

But could this be managed, the additional expence necessarily attendant on such a performance, would make the matter impracticable. This Mr. Dryden foresaw long ago. The passage is curious.

“ A new Theatre, much more ample and much
 “ deeper, must be made for that purpose; besides the
 “ cost of sometimes forty or fifty habits: which is an
 “ expence too large to be supplied by a company of
 “ actors. It is true, I should not be sorry to see a
 “ *Chorus* on a Theatre, more than as large and as
 “ deep again as ours, built and adorned at a King’s
 “ charges; and on that condition, and another, which
 “ is, that my hands were not bound behind me, as
 “ now they are, I should not despair of making such
 “ a Tragedy as might be both instructive and delightful according to the manner of the Grecians.”
 What he means by having *his hands bound*, I imagine,

is, that he was either engaged to his subscribers for a Translation of Virgil, or to the manager of the Theatre for so many plays a season. This suffrage of Mr. Dryden is, however, very apposite to the present point. It serves, also, to vindicate my design of imitating the Greek Drama. For if he, who was so prejudiced to the modern stage, as to think intrigue a capital beauty in it; if he, I say, owns that the grand secret *prodesse et delectare* was the characteristic of the Greek Drama only, nothing can better justify my present attempt than the approbation he gives to it in this passage.

Having now settled with you all matters of general criticism, I hope in your next you will give me your objections to *scenes, speeches, images, &c.* And be assured I shall treat your judgment in these matters with greater deference, than I have done in what related to the Stage and the Chorus.

Pembroke Hall, 1751.

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* ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page 10. verse 19.

On the left,
Reside the sages † skill'd in nature's lore :

† i. e. The Euvates; one of the three classes of the Druids, according to Am. Marcellinus. *Studia liberalium doctrinarum inchoata per Bardos, Euvates, et Druidas.* This class, Strabo tells us, had the care of the sacrifices, and studied natural philosophy; which here, by *the changeful universe*, is shewn to be on Pythagorean principles. Whenever the *Priests* are mentioned in the subsequent parts of the Drama, this order of men is intended to be meant, as distinguished from the Druids and Bards.

Page 15. verse 14.

Thou shalt live;
Yet shalt thou live an interdicted wretch,
All rights of nature cancell'd.

Alluding to the Druidical power of excommunication, mentioned by Caesar. *Si quis aut privatus, aut*

* The above quotations, from ancient authors, are here thrown together, in order to support and explain some passages in the Drama of Caractacus, that

publicus, eorum decreto non stetit, sacrificiis interficiunt. Haec poena apud eos est gravissima. Quibus ita est interdictum, ii numero impiorum ac sceleratorum habentur—neque iis petentibus jus redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur. Caes. Com. Lib. vi.

Page 18. verse 5.

Are the milk-white steers prepar'd?

In the minute description which Pliny gives us of the ceremony of gathering the mistletoe, he tells us, they sacrificed two white bulls. See Pliny's Natural History, l. xvi. c. 44. which Drayton, in his Polybion, thus versifies.

Sometimes within my shades, in many an ancient wood,
Whose often twined tops great Phoebus' fires withstood,
The fearless British priest, under an aged oak,
Taking a milk-white bull, unstrained with the yoke,
And with an axe of gold, from that Jove-sacred tree
The mistletoe cut down; then with a bended knee
On the unhewn altar laid, put to the hallow'd fires;
And whilst in the sharp flame the trembling flesh expires,

As their strong fury mov'd (when all the rest adore)
Pronouncing their desires the sacrifice before,

respect the manners of the Druids; and which, the general account of their customs, to be found in our histories of Britain, does not include.

Up to the eternal heaven their bloodied hands did rear:
And whilst the murmuring woods even shudder'd as
with fear,

Preach'd to the beardless youth the soul's immortal
state;

To other bodies still how it should transmigrate,
That to contempt of death them strongly did excite.

Ninth Song.

Page 18. verse 24.

Where our matron sister dwells.

The existence of female Druids seems ascertained by Tacitus, in his description of the final destruction of Mona by Paulinus Suetonius. *Stabat pro litore diversa acies densa armis virisque, intercurfantibus foeminis, &c.* Also by the known story of Dioclesian, on which Fletcher formed a play, called the Prophets.

Page 19. verse 1.

And the potent adder-stone.

The ovum anguinum, or serpent's egg; a famous Druidical amulet, thus circumstantially described by Pliny.—*Praeterea est ovorum genus in magna Galliarum fama, omisum Graecis. Angues innumeri aestate convoluti, salivis faucium corporumque spumis artificio complexu glomerantur; Anguinum appellatur. Druidae sibilis id dicunt in sublime jactari, sagoque oportere intercipi, ne tellurem attingat. Profu-*

gere raptorem equo, serpentes enim insequi, donec arceantur, amnis alicujus interventu, &c. Nat. Hist. l. xxix. c. 3.

There are remains of this superstition still, both in the northern and western parts of our island. For Lhwyd, the author of the Archeologia, writes thus to Rowland; see *Mona Antiqua*, p. 338. “The Druid
“ doctrine about the *Glain Neidr*, obtains very much
“ through all Scotland, as well lowlands as high-
“ lands; but there is not a word of it in this king-
“ dom (Ireland); where, as there are no snakes, they
“ could not propagate it. Besides snake-stones, the
“ highlanders have their snail-stones, paddock-stones,
“ &c. to all which they attribute their several vir-
“ tues, and wear them as amulets.” And in another
letter he writes, “The Cornish retain variety of
“ charms, and have still, towards the land’s end, the
“ amulet of Maen Magal, and *Glain Neidr*, which
“ latter they call a *Milpreu*, or *Melpreu*, and have a
“ charm for the snake to make it, when they have
“ found one asleep, and struck a hazel wand in the
“ centre of her spires.”

Page 33. verse 13.

Have the milk-white steeds
Unrein’d, and, neighing, pranc’d with favouring steps.

The few and imperfect accounts antiquity gives us of ceremonies, &c. which are unquestionably Druidical, make it necessary in this, and in other places of

the Drama, to have recourse to Tacitus's account of the Germans; amongst whom, if there were really no established Druids, there was certainly a great correspondence, in religious opinions, with the Gauls and Britons. The passage here alluded to, is taken from his 10th chapter. *Proprium gentis, equorumque quoque praefagia ac monitus experiri. Publicè aluntur iisdem nemoribus ac lucis, candidi et nullo mortali opere contacti, quos pressos sacro curru, sacerdos ac rex, vel princeps civitatis comitantur, hinnitus et fremitus observant, nec ulli auspicio major fides non solum apud plebem, sed apud proceres, apud sacerdotes.*

Page 34. verse 10.

'Thou art a king, a sovereign o'er frail man;
I am a Druid, servant of the Gods:
Such service is above such sovereignty.

The supreme authority of the Druids over their Kings, is thus ascertained by Dion. Chrysostom.—

Κεῖνοι δὲ οὓς ὀνομαζοῦσι Δρύϊδας, καὶ τούτους περὶ Μαντικὴν ὄντας, καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν, ὧν ἄντι, τοῖς Βασιλεῦσιν ἑδὲν ἔξῃν πράττειν, ἡδὲ Βυλεῦσθαι, ὥστε τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς ἐκείνης ἄρχειν, τοὺς δὲ βασιλείας, αὐτῶν ὑπηρετάς καὶ διακόνους γίνεσθαι τῆς γνώμης, ἐν θρόνοις χρυσοῖς καθημένους, καὶ οἰκίας μεγάλας οἰκούντας, καὶ πολυτίμως εὐωχούμενης. Helmodus also de Slavis, l. ii. c. 12. asserts, *Rex apud eos modicae est aestimationis in comparatione flammis.*

Page 35. verse 2.

The time will come, when Destiny and Death
Thron'd in a burning car—

Strabo, and other writers, tell us, the Druids taught, that the world was finally to be destroyed by fire; upon which this allegory is founded.

Page 41. verse 9.

The gods my brethren,
Have wak'd these doubts in the untainted breast
Of this mild maiden.

Inesse enim sanctum quid et providum foeminis putant. Nec aut consilia ipsorum aspernantur, aut responsa negant. Tac. de Morib. Germ. And Strabo to the like purpose, l. vii. Ἀπαντες γὰρ τῆς δισσιδαμονίας ἀρχηγούς οἰοῦνται τὰς γυναῖκας.

Page 46. verse 24.

Behold yon huge
And unhewn sphere of living adamant.

This is meant to describe the rocking-stone, of which there are several still to be seen in Wales, Cornwall, and Derbyshire. They are universally supposed, by antiquarians, to be Druid monuments; and Mr. Toland thinks, “that the Druids made the
“ people believe that they only could move them,
“ and that by a miracle, by which they condemned

“ or acquitted the accused, and often brought criminals to confess what could in no other way be extorted from them.” It was this conjecture which gave the hint for this piece of machinery. The reader may find a description of one of these rocking-stones in Camden’s Britannia, in his account of Pembroke-shire; and also several in Borlase’s history of Cornwall.

Page 72. verse 14.

——And its name

Trifingus.

The name of the enchanted sword in the Hervarer Saga.

Page 72. verse 21.

By the bright circle of the golden sun.

This adjuration is taken from the literal form of the old Druidical oath, which they administered to their disciples; and which the learned Selden, in Prolog. de Diis Syr. gives us from Vettius Valens Antiochenus, l. vii. It is as follows: Τῆς ταῖς παραγγελίαις ἡμῶν πειθομένους ὀρχίζου ἩΛΙΟΥ μὲν ἱερὸν κύκλον καὶ ΣΕΛΗΝΗΣ ἀνωμάλως δρόμους, τῶν τε λοιπῶν ΑΣΤΕΡΩΝ δυνάμεις καὶ κύκλον ΔΥΟΚΑΙΔΕΚΑ ΣΩΔΙΩΝ, ἐν ἀποκρύφιοις ταῦτα ἔχειν, καὶ τοῖς ἀπαιδεύτοις ἢ ἀμυήτοις μὴ μεταδιδόναι, τιμὴν τε καὶ μνήμην τῷ εἰσγηταμένῳ ἀπονέμειν, &c.

Page 80. verse 18.

Near each a white-rob'd Druid, whose stern voice
'Thunder'd deep execrations on the foe.

This account is taken from what history tells us did really happen some years after, when the groves of Mona were destroyed by Suetonius Paulinus. Igitur Monam insulam incolis validam, et receptaculum perfugarum aggredi parat, navesque fabricatur plano alveo, adversus breve litus et incertum. Sic Pedes; equites vado secuti, aut altiores inter undas, adnantes equis transimere. Stabat pro litore diversa acies densa armis virisque, intercurrentibus foeminis: in modum Furiarum, veste ferali crinibus dejectis *faces* praeferabant. Druidae circum, preces diras sublatis ad coelum manibus fundentes, novitate aspectus perculere milites ut, quasi haerentibus membris, immobile corpus vulneribus praeberent. Dein cohortationibus ducis, et se ipsi stimulantibus ne muliebri et fanaticum agmen pavescerent, inferunt signa, sternuntque obvios et igni suo involvunt. TAC. Ann. l. xiv. c. 29.

Page 90. verse 19.

These shapeless symbols of your barbarous gods.

The Druids did not really worship the Divinity under any symbol. But this is put intentionally into the mouth of the Roman, as mistaking the rude stones placed round the grove, for idols. Thus Lucan

in his beautiful description of a Druid grove,

———*simulacraque moesta decorum*

Arte carent, caelisque extant informia truncis.

PHAR. Lib. iii.

Some imagery from the same description is also borrowed in the opening of the Drama.

Page 95. verse 9.

———Soldier, I had arms.

This passage, and some others in this scene, are taken from Caractacus's famous speech in Tacitus, before the throne of Claudius; but here adapted to his dramatic character.

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III

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4 DE 60

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a letter or document, written on lined paper. The text is arranged in several vertical columns, reading from right to left. The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, characteristic of a personal or informal document. The paper shows signs of age and wear, including a dark smudge near the bottom center.

Maria Helena Lundberg

Lumina born 28 September 1799

Jamaica 21 September 1815

